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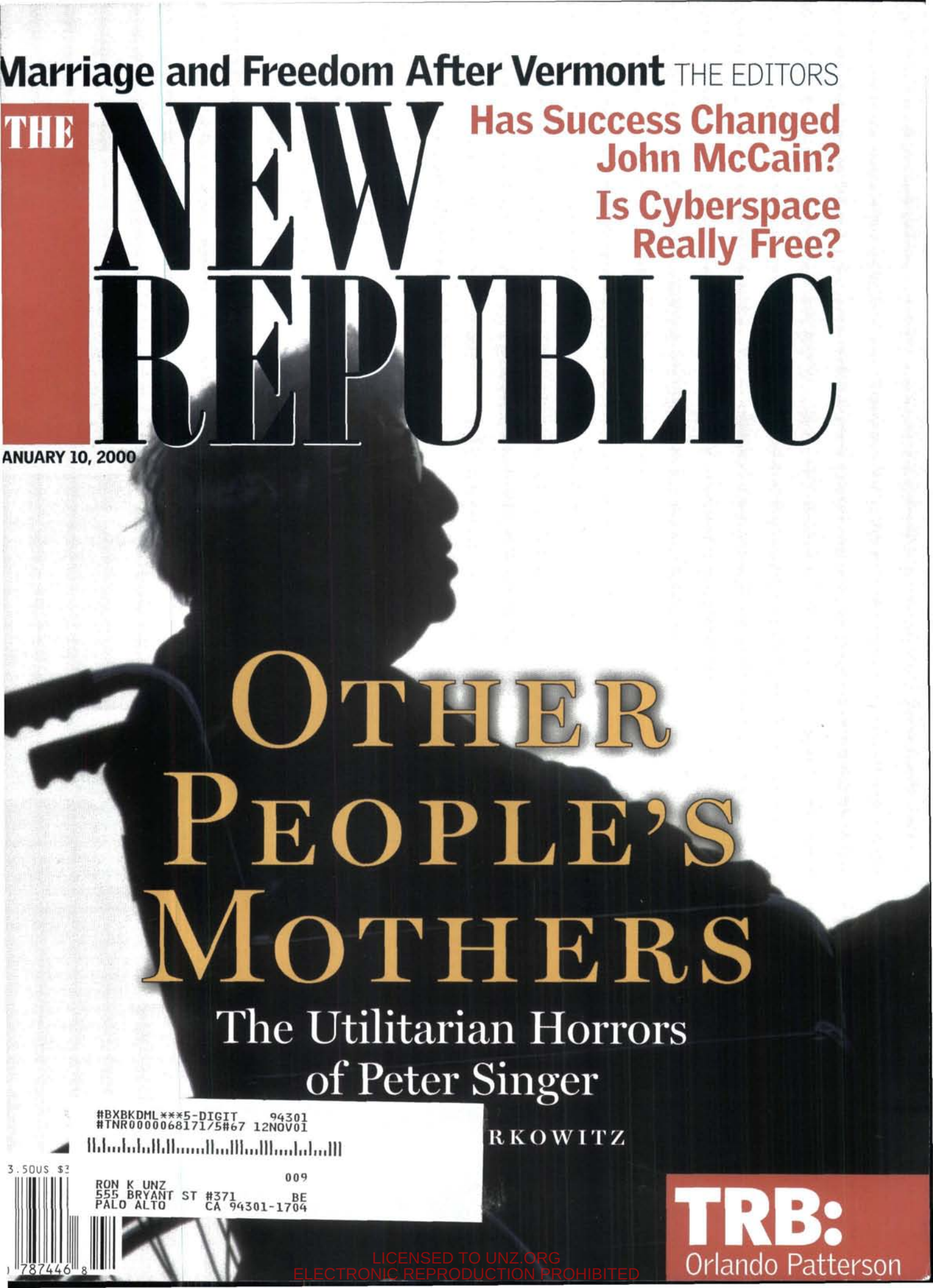

OTHER PEOPLE'S MOTHERS

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For the record

To the editors:

Your December 13 issue prints a letter from Victoria Toensing, who writes as attorney for Linda Shenwick, the subject of an article in your November 1 issue ("The Source," by Jacob Heilbrunn and Ryan Lizza). That story mentions a 1994 meeting in Washington, D.C., regarding a U.S. initiative at the United Nations at which Shenwick reported that the Cubans "might be interested in a deal" to support the U.S. proposal in exchange for U.S. help in securing a high-level U.N. post for a Cuban official. Toensing obliquely disassociates Shenwick from involvement in the matter, then flatly states: "Ambassador Victor Marrero was the U.S. policy person who made that deal." I appreciate that in his reply Lizza correctly points out that this accusation is made "without a shred of evidence." Nonetheless, I believe the letter contains a patently defamatory allegation made with malicious intent and reckless disregard for the truth.

Toensing's claim, so categorically asserted, presumes as fact that "that deal" was made, that she and her client have knowledge of it, and that they possess evidence to support their contention. I was not the source who brought the underlying information to your writers' attention, although I was one of a few State Department officials familiar with the facts. I suspect that by process of elimination Shenwick speculated (incorrectly) that I disclosed this incident to The New Republic and that she resorted to this particularly virulent means to pursue vengeful ends. Whatever groundless motives and ethical lapses may lie behind the accusation, it is certainly not supported by facts.

The facts are, as you reported, that a meeting of senior U.S. foreign policy officials did take place in Washington in the summer of 1994 to discuss a proposal then under consideration at the United Nations to establish an office of inspector general. I attended for the U.S. mission to the United Nations, as did Shenwick. Also present was Douglas Bennet, then the assistant secretary of state for international organizations. In the course of the discussions, Shenwick said that she had been approached by Even Fontaine-Ortiz, a Cuban official who served with Shenwick on a key U.N. committee, with regard to a high-level U.N. position he sought, and that Ortiz had suggested that the Cubans could support the U.S. proposal if the United States endorsed his appointment. (At that point, I had never met Ortiz nor spoken to him; I first made his acquaintance in mid-1997.)

Although for several weeks I had been working closely with Shenwick and was her supervisor on the U.N. inspector-general matter, her report at that meeting was the first time I heard anything about the proposed Cuban "deal." Nor had any other U.S. mission executive been made aware of it. Bennet gave unequivocal instructions then—to Shenwick and all the other senior officials present, and subsequently to the other U.S. mission ambassadors—that under no circumstances would he entertain any association by the United States with such an agreement. As far as I was concerned, Bennet's instructions closed the matter. It was the last I heard of it—until now.

When Lizza asked for my comment, I not only dismissed Toensing's charge as preposterous and denied involvement in the alleged "deal," but I also explained at great length U.S. policy relating to appointments of U.N. staff. That policy did not permit U.S. officials, except with prior Washington approval given only in very rare circumstances, to advocate employment of candidates from other countries. In the case of a Cuban official, it would have been unthinkable to gain consent—especially after the assistant secretary had so firmly rejected any consideration of the notion—and not without a rigorous policy review on the record by senior U.S. foreign policy executives in New York, which would have included Shenwick, and in Washington.

Loathsome and baseless as I know the allegation is, if Toensing or her client has any proof to substantiate it, I invite them to put it on the official record, preferably under oath. I would be willing to so testify.

Victor Marrero
Austin, Texas

Tall tale

To the editors:

As a former journalist and a former employee of Karen Hughes, I was amazed by the tone and content of "The Enforcer," by Michelle Cottle (November 29). Cottle captured neither Hughes nor her relationship with George W. Bush.

I won't argue with Cottle's observation that Hughes is tall. But the rest of the physical descriptions in the article are bewildering. I should not find it necessary to point this out, but in fairness I have to say that Hughes is strikingly attractive and always looks professional. Would Cottle have described the clothing and shoe size of a male communications director? I'm sure if Hughes were a clotheshorse, she would be criticized for that, too.

I have never been a member of the "inner circle," just someone who likes both Bush and Hughes very much. So I won't presume to say anything more than this: Bush and Hughes clearly like and respect each other. They enjoy working together, and they create a great working environment by surrounding themselves with an amazing group of smart, wonderful people. Their sincerity is evident and infectious.

Call me a softy, but there are people in this world who do not deserve to be ripped to shreds, mischaracterized, and insulted.

Anne Friedenberg Swanson
Austin, Texas

Viable exceptions

To the editors:

Maryland is an exception to Jeffrey Rosen's assertion that "pro-choicers reject any restrictions [on post-viability abortion] on principle" ("Sideshow," November 29). Legislation enacted by a pro-choice majority in the General Assembly in 1991 provides that an abortion may be performed after the fetus is viable only if "the termination procedure is necessary to protect the life or health of the woman or the fetus is affected by genetic defect or serious deformity or abnormality." When that law was petitioned to referendum, it was approved by 62 percent of the voters.

This language is consistent with the Supreme Court's decisions in *Roe* and *Casey*. It also makes redundant a ban on so-called partial-birth abortions.

Samuel I. Rosenberg
Representative
Maryland House of Delegates
Baltimore, Maryland

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Zeroed out

TO THE EDITORS:

In reference to your editorial ("The Fight's Not Over") in the December 6 issue, I would like to call attention to some of the highly detrimental consequences of zero-tolerance policies. By focusing on the Decatur, Illinois, high school students who were fighting, we continue to ignore the realities of zero tolerance.

Those most frequently barred from school are middle-school children—early adolescents who are (by nature and definition) impulsive and in need of guidance. And the list of offenses that trigger zero-tolerance responses continues to grow. The stories of first-graders expelled for hugging a classmate or bringing a butter knife to cut brownies are not aberrations. In addition, normal behaviors such as pushing and fighting are now called "assault," and the children involved are referred to the courts. Children are even expelled for merely talking about school violence.

For many children, there is no alternative to public education. The hardship that expulsion places on the working parents of such children is enormous. Nor are there adequate support services for children who are truly troubled and in need of help.

Young people are impetuous and compulsive; adolescents who make jokes about guns or bombs are often just trying to handle the information they get from the media. We as adults must help these youngsters manage their fears and impulses. But we as a society have chosen to identify every child as potentially dangerous. This is destructive to the children and to our national future. Zero-tolerance policies punish children who are often frightened, sometimes thoughtless, rarely dangerous, but now clearly endangered.

RUTH ZWEIFLER
Executive Director
Student Advocacy Center of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan

In solidarity

TO THE EDITORS:

I must assume that Jonathan Cohn did not speak with the people on the ground working to pass "Clean Money" reform at the state level when he wrote his article ("Taking Offense," November 29). If he had, he would have learned that Common Cause, along with the League of Women Voters, the Sierra Club, and others, was a major player that worked very hard—along with Public Campaign—to pass Clean Money reforms in Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Arizona. Cohn's gratuitous swipes at Common Cause and other reform groups reflect a failure to understand that the push for reform can and should take various forms in order to take advantage of different political opportunities. As these groups again join in coalition in 2000 to pass public financing in states like Connecticut, Cohn may want to make sure he has a complete picture of the efforts under way.

CLAUDIA MALLOY
Common Cause
Associate Director, Grassroots Lobbying
Washington, D.C.

JONATHAN COHN REPLIES:

I am well aware that Common Cause activists worked to pass "Clean Election" laws. My beef is with the group's overall emphasis, which reflects the decision-making by its Washington office and its governing board. Over the past 25 years, Common Cause has sunk enormous resources into the pursuit of compromise—watered-down legislation at the national level—even though that effort has proved futile.

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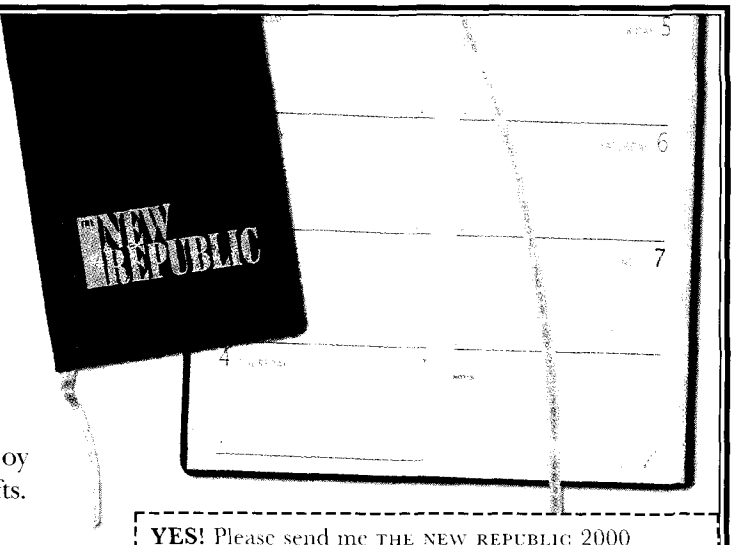

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FROM WASHINGTON

Race Over

ONE CAN QUIBBLE with W.E.B. Du Bois's famous prediction for the twentieth century. This has been not simply the century of the color line but a century of Jim Crow and myriad other persecutions—many within color boundaries. But, if Du Bois's epigraph was only half right, his modern-day disciples, who insist the color line will define the next 100 years as well, are altogether wrong. The racial divide that has plagued America since its founding is fading fast—made obsolete by migratory, sociological, and biotechnological developments that are already under way. By the middle of the twenty-first century, America will have problems aplenty. But no racial problem whatsoever.

For this we can thank four social patterns, each indigenous to a particular region of the country but which together will reshape the nation as a whole. The strongest and clearest might be called the California system. Cultural and somatic mixture will be its hallmark. A hybrid population, mainly Eurasian—but with a growing Latin element—will come to dominate the middle and upper classes and will grow exponentially, especially after the 2020s. Lower-class Caucasians, middle-class racial purists, and most African Americans, under pressure from an endless stream of unskilled Mexican workers, will move away. Those African Americans who remain will be rapidly absorbed into the emerging mixed population. The California system will come to dominate the American and Canadian Pacific Rim.

The second major pattern might be called the Caribbean-American system. Increasingly, the countries of the Caribbean basin will be socially and economically integrated with the United States. As their fragile and already declining economies collapse (most dramatically in post-Castro Cuba), they will swarm the mainland by legal and illegal means. Florida will be the metropolitan center of this system, although Caribbean colonies will sprout all over the Northeast. Caribbean peoples will bring their distinctive concept of race and color to America, one in which people marry lighter and "white" as they move up the social ladder. This system will differ from the California one in that the dominant element will be Afro-Latin rather than Eurasian. Since the Caribbean is much closer than Asia, this system will also create a distinctive social type: genuinely transnational and post-national communities in which people feel equally at home in their native and American locations. Increasingly, people will spend their childhoods and retirements in the Caribbean and their productive years in America. The Caribbean-American system will compete with the African American community not only in the lower reaches of the labor force but as the nation's major source of popular culture, especially in music and sports. But, despite these differences, the Caribbean-American system, like the California one, will render the "one drop" rule obsolete.

The third and most problematic system will be the one now emerging in the Northeast and urban Midwest. Here, the economic situation for all classes of African Americans and native-born Latinos is likely to deteriorate—with the ending of affirmative action, a shrinking public sector, and competition from skilled and unskilled (mainly Caribbean basin) immigrant labor. The rise of workfare without compensating provision for child care, combined with the growing pattern of paternal abandonment of children, will further undermine traditional family norms among African American, Latino, and, increasingly, the European American lower classes. Reversing the pattern that emerged after World War II, African Americans, Latinos, and the poorest Caucasians will move into the inner and secondary rings of what are now mainly European American middle-class suburbs. The middle classes will move to either gated exurbs or gentrified central cities—leaving a European American underclass that resembles other ethnic underclasses more and more.

But, although these developments will at first exacerbate racial conflict, they will ultimately transform racial frustrations into class ones. Indeed, for the first time in the nation's history, young, poor, and alienated Caucasians, African Americans, and Latinos will find common ground—based on social resentment and a common lumpen-proletarian, hip-hop culture. Even as these young people periodically engage in murderous racial gang fights, intermarriage and miscegenation will escalate as the young poor of all races break away from present gender and racial taboos. In contrast to the California and Florida systems, the growing hybrid population in the Northeast and industrial Midwest will be lower-class, alienated, and out of control. But it will be hybrid nonetheless.

The exception will be in the Southeast, in what may be called the Atlanta pattern. African Americans and European Americans will cling to notions of racial purity and will remain highly (and voluntarily) segregated from each other. Affirmative action will be the bulwark of this system, the price the European American elite willingly pays for "racial" stability and the reassuring presence of a culturally familiar but socially distant African American group and a pliant working class. The old Confederacy will remain a place where everyone knows who is white and who is black and need reckon with no in-between. But, as opposed to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when the South defined the terms of racial engagement on which the entire nation interacted (more or less brutally), in the twenty-first century the Southern model will become an increasingly odd and decreasingly relevant anachronism.

For the decline of race as a factor in American life will result not only from immigration, which can perhaps be halted, but also from biotechnology. More and more in the coming decades, Americans will gain the means to genetically manipulate human appearance. The foundations of genetic engineering are already in place. Given the interest of the affluent population in male-pattern baldness, the restoration of hair loss after cancer treatment, and cancer-free tanning, science is likely to create dramatic new methods of changing hair texture and skin color. Indeed, last November, scientists at Columbia University transplanted scalp cells from one person to another. I don't expect many African Americans to chose straight-haired whiteness for themselves or their progeny, but many will opt for varying degrees of hybridity. In a world dominated by mass culture, many will embrace changes that enhance their individuality. Once dramatically manipulable by human action, "race" will lose its social significance, and the myth of racial purity will be laid to rest.

By the middle of the next century, the social virus of race will have gone the way of smallpox. The twenty-first century, relieved of the obscuring blinkers of race, will be a century of class and class consciousness, forcing the nation to finally take seriously its creed that all are created equal. It should be interesting.

ORLANDO PATTERSON

ORLANDO PATTERSON is professor of sociology at Harvard University and author of *Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries.*

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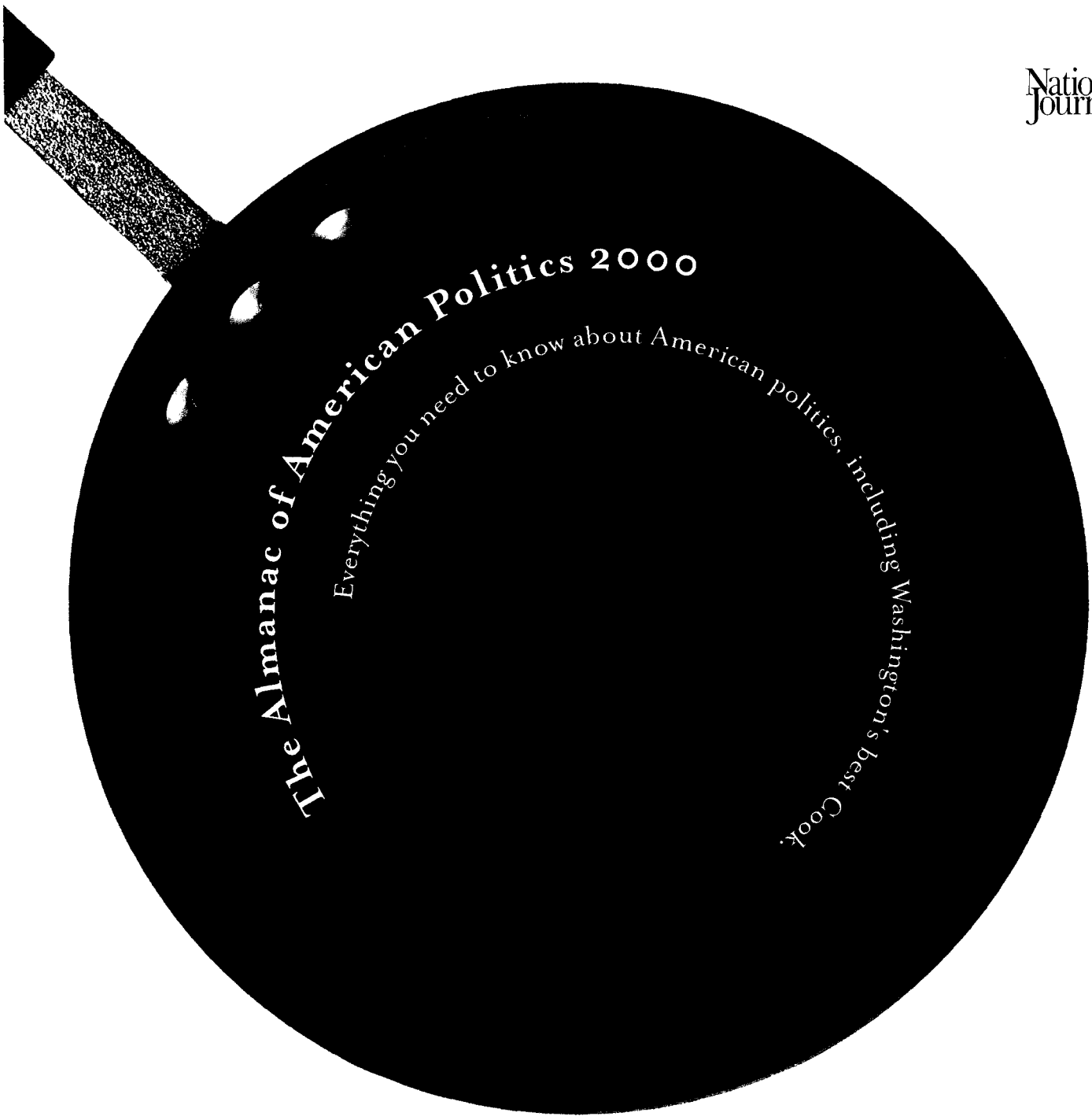
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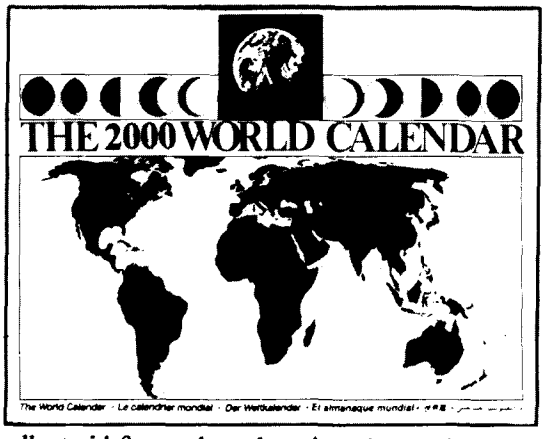

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Separate but Equal?

WE CANNOT PUT it better than the justices of the Supreme Court of Vermont: "The extension of the Common Benefits Clause [of the Vermont Constitution] to acknowledge plaintiffs as Vermonters who seek nothing more, nor less, than legal protection and security for their avowed commitment to an intimate and lasting human relationship is simply, when all is said and done, a recognition of our common humanity." The December 20 ruling in *Baker* v. *State* stands as a legal landmark in the controversy about equal marriage rights for homosexuals. It is more important than the Hawaii Supreme Court's recent meanderings, because it is unlikely to be overruled by the legislature or by popular referendum, and because it rests not on the tangential issue of whether a ban on same-sex marriage violates sexual equality (as the Hawaii court argued) but on the question of whether it violates civil equality itself.

We believe it does. As civil marriage is currently conceived and practiced in America, it contains no requirements and holds out no aspirations that homosexuals cannot achieve as easily as heterosexuals. The point of modern marriage is not merely to procreate—as many childless heterosexual married couples attest. Neither is it to entrench ancient gender roles, with women at home and men at work—as innumerable working families prove. It is to provide a secure, acknowledged institution in which the love of one person for another can find expression and support and in which children, if they are present, can find security and protection. If homosexual love is as deep and as worthy as heterosexual love and if the children of homosexuals are deserving of as much social support as the children of heterosexuals, then there is no principled reason to allow civil marriage for straights but not for gays. Legalizing gay marriage, then, is not a radical reformulation of an unchanging institution. It is the long-overdue correction of a moral anomaly that dehumanizes and excludes a significant portion of the human race.

Opponents of civil marriage for homosexuals (whose ranks include, shamefully, the two Democratic candidates for president and, of course, all the Republican candidates) argue that it will weaken heterosexual marriage. But it is hard to see how. No existing heterosexual marriage will be changed. Same-sex marriage only harms opposite-sex marriage if you believe that homosexuality is so immoral that legitimizing it would instantly undermine family life. We do not hold that belief. Homosexuals are already part of families across America, and they always have been. They deserve to be there under better conditions than strained condescension and fickle toleration. If anything, the equal inclusion of homosexuals in marriage will strengthen family life as it folds gay family members into the social warp and woof of their parents and siblings. Some argue that such a change should never be imposed by the courts, since homosexuality remains a source of widespread public unease. But surely such an argument also applied to the courts' assaults on anti-miscegenation laws in the 1950s and '60s. Should the courts not have struck down those laws for fear of invoking "judicial tyranny"? After all, public hostility toward interracial marriage was at least as great in 1967, when it was finally protected by *Loving* v. *Virginia*, as is hostility toward same-sex marriage today.

Post-Vermont, we have entered a different world. But it contains pitfalls as well as opportunities. One danger is that supporters of equal marriage rights will accept a semantic compromise that would grant homosexuals every benefit and responsibility of civil marriage but deny them the word. The Vermont legislature is under pressure to construct an elaborate parallel institution, a kind of super-domestic-partnership, that would be identical in all legal respects to marriage but not invoke the m-word. There is an old phrase for this kind of arrangement: separate but equal. To grant homosexuals all the substance of marriage while denying them the institution is, in some ways, a purer form of bigotry than denying them any rights at all. It is to devise a pseudo-institution to both erase inequality and at the same time perpetuate it. What if Virginia had struck down interracial-marriage bans only to erect a new distinction between same-race marriages and mixed-race "domestic partnerships"?

There is in fact no argument for a domestic-partnership compromise except that the maintenance of stigma is an important social value—that if homosexuals are finally allowed on the marriage bus, they should still be required to sit in the back. This "solution" smacks of the equally incoherent half-measure of "don't ask, don't tell," another unwieldy contraption that was designed to overcome discrimination but instead has ruthlessly reinforced it. Equality is equality. Marriage is marriage. There is no ultimate moral or political answer to this question but to grant both. And to keep marshaling the moral, religious, civic, and human reasons why it is an eminently important and noble thing to do. ■

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NOTEBOOK

BALLOT BLOCKS: You'd think the Bush campaign would have learned to stop ceding the moral high ground to John McCain. But, perhaps in keeping with the giving spirit of the season, the New York Republican Party—led by Governor George Pataki, a man panting for a spot on the Bush ticket—has handed McCain the perfect reformist crusade: the democratization of New York's Republican primary. For decades, the state GOP has stacked the deck against insurgents. During a 37-day period that spans the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, primary candidates must collect 20,000 signatures from registered Republicans throughout New York, including samples from all 31 congressional districts. Such a Herculean task is attainable only by those with the backing of the party apparatus—or with preternaturally deep pockets. Since the inception of the state GOP primary in 1980, each election has featured a single, uncontested candidate, the sole exception occurring in 1996, when Steve Forbes sued the party to get his name on the ballot. The lawsuit resulted in a slight softening of the requirements, and now, with the same legal team that Forbes used, McCain is suing as well. Most likely he'll win, bolster his good-guy image, and gain additional media sympathy. Which raises an obvious question: Why does the supposedly ultra-savvy Bush juggernaut keep screwing up?

CAMPAIGN DEFICIT: Right before Christmas, the Federal Election Commission (FEC) announced that seven presidential candidates—Al Gore, Bill Bradley, John McCain, Gary Bauer, Pat Buchanan, Alan Keyes, and Lyndon LaRouche—had qualified for a combined total of $34 million in government campaign funds. The money—known as matching funds, since the government matches federal dollars to the first $250 of individual contributions in exchange for the candidates' agreeing to abide by spending limits—is intended to level the electoral playing field and free candidates from endless fund-raising. Unfortunately, the FEC currently has enough money on hand to pay out only about half of the $34 million in matching funds that is owed. So a system already in shambles because the richest candidates (i.e., Bush and Forbes) increasingly bypass it isn't even giving the poor suckers who abide by it the money due them. One reason is that the commission has continually upped the amount of money available to candidates (for instance, in 1976, candidates could receive up to $20 million in matching funds; today they can receive up to $67 million) without similarly increasing the checkoff on tax returns that funds the money pool. In 1974 taxpayers were asked to designate $1 for matching funds; today they're asked to designate $3. But, even if the FEC raised the checkoff from $3 to $6, it probably wouldn't erase the shortfall. That's because only twelve to 13 percent of taxpayers actually check the matching-funds donation box on their tax returns. One reason may be that some libertarian-minded taxpayers don't like the idea of public money being spent on elections. But a more likely explanation for the low donation rate is the confusing wording on the tax forms, which, focus groups have shown, has led some taxpayers to believe they're paying an *extra* $3 to help provide campaign matching funds. In fact, the $3 for the matching funds is merely diverted from the taxes they already owe. Perhaps the pro-Dubya Republican Congress will clear up this confusion in time for tax day 2000. Don't hold your breath.

BY ANY OTHER NAME: If you had watched Peter Jennings's nightly ABC news show on Tuesday, December 28, you would have seen a report on the negotiations in Afghanistan between the Indian government and the hijackers of an Indian Airlines plane carrying more than 150 passengers. The hijackers demanded $200 million, the release of some of their comrades from prison, and the return of the body of another. Who were the perpetrators of this terrorist act? Both Jennings and the reporter, Lynn Sherr, called them "militants." In fact, the word "militants" was uttered three times. But what kind of militants? No adjective characterized the ideology in which the men so fervently believe. To be sure, ABC mentioned that the hijackers seek the independence of Kashmir. But nationalism is not the essence of their ideology. They do not want a secular, pluralist Kashmir. Kashmir is only a geographic location onto which they can project their pathological brand of Islam. Of course, not all Muslims are militants, and, of course, Islam is not an inevitably militant theology, but to refuse to call these men "Islamic militants" is to lapse into politically correct incoherence. Would ABC hesitate before calling violent anti-abortionists "Christian militants" or West Bank murderer Baruch Goldstein a "Jewish militant"? But the silliness and timidity that keeps Jennings from using the word "Islamic" to modify words like "militant" or "terrorist" is not his alone. On December 21, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright hosted a State Department dinner to commemorate the holy month of Ramadan. Her speech attacked Harvard University Professor Samuel P. Huntington for his essay, published in *Foreign Affairs* six years ago, predicting a "clash of civilizations" between Islam and the West. But her audience included men and women who themselves have called for such a clash. Indeed, it included at least one person whom the scrupulous U.S. attorney in New York, Mary Jo White, had named as a possible unindicted co-conspirator in the World Trade Center bombing trial of Omar Abdel Rahman. Albright may well be right that no civilizational clash is in the offing. But her stated proof—a resolution in the U.N. General Assembly, cosponsored by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States, calling for a "dialogue of civilizations"—is absurd. Iran, its minor reforms notwithstanding, is a tyrannical regime dangerous to America and to its own people. It is no more representative of authentic Persian "civilization" than Mahathir Mohamad's Malaysia is of true Asian civilization. It's time to stop making excuses for murderous governments and murderous individuals. Muslims have themselves been victims of great terror in our time, most notably in Bosnia and Kosovo. But it is also the case that during the past few decades terror has become a growing element in the politics of Islam, not only in the Middle East but in South Asia, North Africa, and parts of the West. In a

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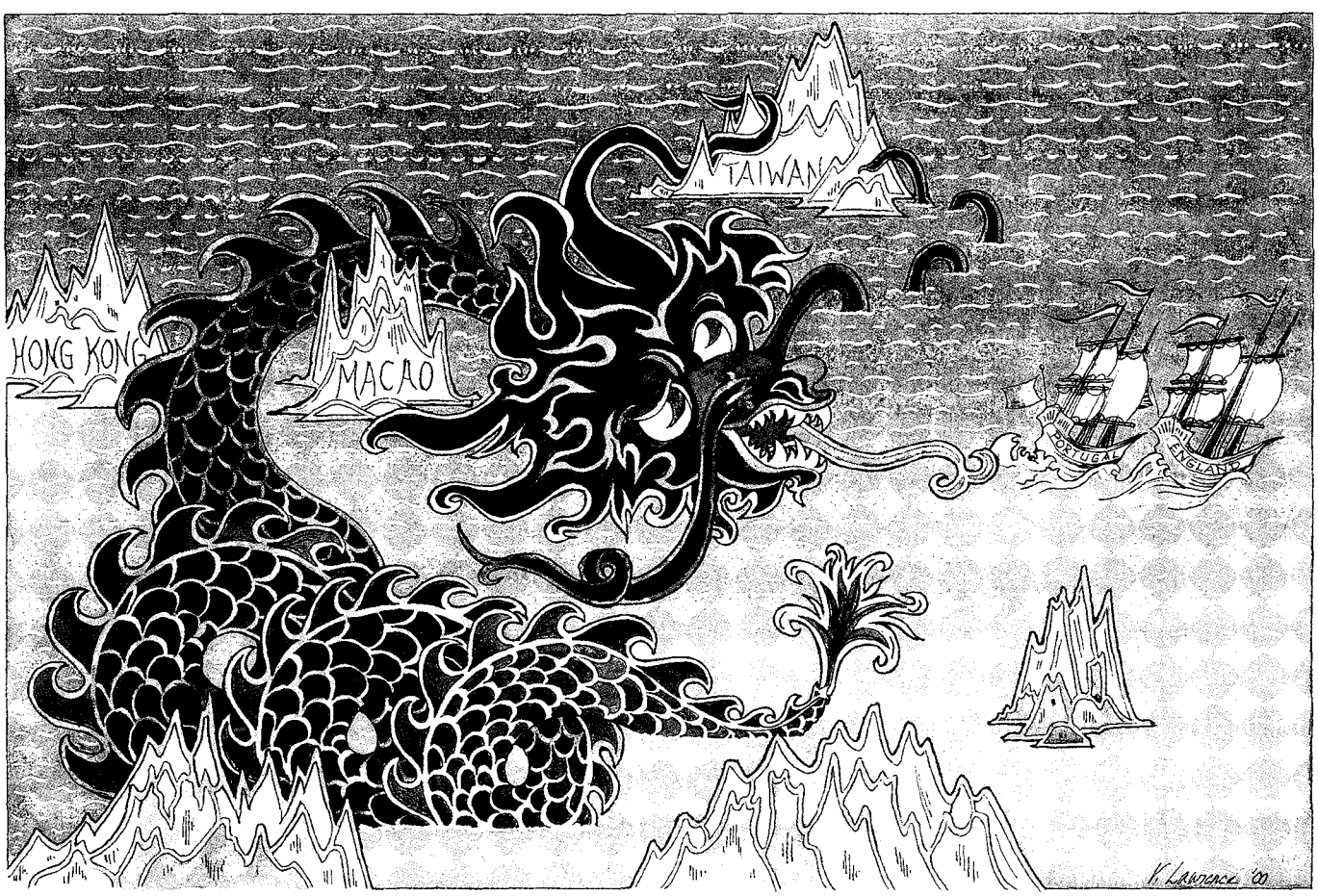
New York Times dispatch from Bethlehem on Christmas Eve, Deborah Sontag reports on a conversation with a German tourist wearing an "I ♥ Palestine" sticker on his lapel. Was he worried about terrorism? His answer: "The terrorists wouldn't attack the Palestinians, would they? This is probably one of the safest places on the planet Earth." No one has a monopoly on terror in contemporary politics. But some ideologies and cultures and places and movements are more distinguished in the field.

WORSE THAN "THE PAT SAJAK SHOW"?: Just in case you thought we'd covered all the millennium silliness in our last issue, here's a late but compelling entry. MSNBC has polled 24,000 visitors to its website on "the worst idea of the millennium." And the winner is, with 5,500 votes: the 1917 Balfour Declaration. Other "bad ideas" on MSNBC's list include communism, war, abortion, the Holocaust, the atomic bomb, and gun control. But none, apparently, were quite as horrific as the early-twentieth-century memorandum that paved the way for a Jewish state in Palestine. Not even New Coke, which came in second.

GROUPTHINK: As befits a story of such magnitude, the denizens of the Fourth Estate reached deep into their literary imaginations for just the right headline to capture "Peanuts" cartoonist Charles Schulz's decision to retire. "GOOD GRIEF!"—*The New York Times*. "GOOD GRIEF!"—*The Washington Post*. "GOOD GRIEF!"—*USA Today*. "GOOD GRIEF!"—*Newsweek*. "GOOD GRIEF!"—*U.S. News & World Report*. "GOOD GRIEF!"—*The Weekly Standard*. "GOOD GRIEF!"—*The Washington Times*. "GOOD GRIEF!"—*Chicago Tribune*. "GOOD GRIEF!"—*Miami New Times*. "GOOD GRIEF!"—*The Hartford Courant*. "GOOD GRIEF!"—*Detroit News*. "GOOD GRIEF!"—*The Miami Herald*. "GOOD GRIEF!"—*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. (And at least 21 more, for good measure.)

TO THE LAUGHTER-IMPAIRED: In our lead editorial in the January 3 issue, "Wild Blue Ponder," we wrote: "Who then will guide us safely to a new American harbor, through the choppy waves of the new global economy, past the roiling storms of ancient hatreds, under the new bridge to the twenty-first century? There is an obvious choice—has there ever been a greater vice president in the history of this shining, hurting republic?—but, beyond him, we at THE NEW REPUBLIC do not know for sure." After calls from our diligent and mildly credulous readers at *The Washington Times* and at Fox's "The O'Reilly Factor," we feel compelled to note that those sentences, the entire editorial, and, indeed, much of the issue itself were parodies. We do, however, remain firm in our conviction that Dick Armey *is* the man of the millennium. ■

VINT'S WEEK



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C. Vann Woodward, 1908–1999.

The Ironist

By Sean Wilentz

C. Vann Woodward, who died on December 17 at the age of 91, was one of the best American historians and the best historian ever of the American South. He excelled as an interpreter, a scholar who asked big and original questions and then dug deep into the sources and his own imagination for the answers. His findings transformed the study of the South—and, thus, of our nation. But he also excelled as a writer of history, or, as he once called himself, "a chronicler." I sometimes suspected that he thought of himself chiefly as a writer, a writer who might just as happily have been a novelist or a poet or a literary critic, but who had stumbled upon the history of his native region as the discipline best suited to his craft. He occasionally told friends and students that his personal favorite of his books was *The Battle of Leyte Gulf*, published in 1947—which was not really a work of history at all, let alone of Southern history, but a creative, accurate account of the largest naval engagement of World War II (and the largest engagement on the high seas ever), written and researched in the aftermath of the events that it described. In his home study in Hamden, Connecticut, he hung pictures of numerous historians whom he admired and had befriended over the years, including Richard Hofstadter and David M. Potter, but in his office at Yale there was just one adornment: a photograph of William Faulkner.

Woodward's prose was spare and elegant, befitting his taste for ambiguity and paradox. The best way to understand the South, Woodward believed, was through its ironies. Those ironies could be biographical, as in the career of the Georgia Populist-turned-racist Tom Watson, the subject of Woodward's first book, which was published in 1938. They could be institutional, as in the case of Southern segregation—a curse that, as Woodward showed in his pathbreaking book *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, arose as much from planters' and businessmen's fears of lower-class whites as from their fears of blacks. And there were larger ironies, as well, which rendered the South a powerful exception to the great American myths of innocence and invincibility.

"Full participation in the legend of irresistible progress, success, and victory could, after all, only be vicarious at best," Woodward wrote in *The Burden of Southern History*. "For the inescapable facts of history were that the South had repeatedly met with frustration and failure. It had learned what it was to be faced with economic, social, and political problems that refused to yield to all the ingenuity, patience, and intelligence that a people could bring to bear upon them. It had learned to accommodate itself to conditions that it swore it would never accept, and it had learned the taste left in the mouth by the swallowing of one's own words. It had learned to live for long decades in quite un-American poverty, and it had learned the equally un-American lesson of submission." Woodward acknowledged that the South has cultivated its own illusions and that white and black Southerners, though bound together in a common history, have had very different tales of submission to tell. Still, he concluded, "[n]othing about this history was conducive to the theory that the South was the darling of divine providence."

Woodward wanted these ironies to humanize his readers and to teach us all an un-American lesson about the frailties and follies of human endeavor. Sometimes he aimed that lesson at Yankee prejudice and complacency, not least with regard to the North's less-than-sterling history of race relations. But he never took comfort merely in turning the moral tables; nor did he retreat into either the hopeless conservatism or the droll cynicism that have so often captivated disillusioned modern American intellectuals. Over a career that spanned seven decades, Woodward remained, steadfastly, a man of deeply liberal instincts and principles—neither a classic Southern white liberal preaching gradualism for its own sake nor a sanctimonious, politically correct do-gooder, but a man for whom history revealed the potential as well as the perils of democratic politics.

Woodward's liberalism made him a public writer as well as a scholar. Apart from W.E.B. Du Bois and John Hope Franklin, no twentieth-century historian made greater intellectual and political contributions to the cause of racial equality. In his writings about the past and the present—including numerous essays for The New Republic, where he was for many years the seniormost contributing editor—he tried to provoke the lay reader as well as the specialist. At age 90, his body failing but his mind still sharp, he spoke out, as a historian and citizen, against the constitutional dangers raised by the crusade against President Clinton. And earlier, when, in the wake of American Stalinism and McCarthyism (and, later, of George Wallace-ism and the late-'60s New Left), it became fashionable among liberals to feel betrayed by and disenchanted with popular dissent, Woodward would not comply. Yes, he admitted, America had produced innumerable populist crackpots and charlatans who had discredited the democratic tradition. America would always produce them. But he remained insistent: "For the tradition to endure, for the way to remain open, however, the intellectual must not be alienated from the sources of revolt."

Tall, ruddy, and graciously reserved, Woodward was the antithesis of today's superstar professors. He had no special gifts as a public speaker, much less as a stand-up performer. In seminars, he was authoritative but laconic and hardly charismatic. His sense of humor, although large and warm and wicked, was dry nearly to the point of evaporation and sometimes confounded those around him. He manifestly enjoyed good conversation (and, after hours, a glass of good whiskey), but I suspect that during much of the time he spent away from his desk and typewriter he was itching to get back to them. It was in his writing—and in his painstaking, encouraging criticism of his students' and colleagues'

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drafts—that he took fire. His true performance was on the page, and he seemed content to leave it at that.

The ironist expected, of course, that his own labors would one day be surpassed and, probably, forgotten. "In America," he observed, "historians, like politicians, are out as soon as they are down. There is no comfortable back bench, no House of Lords for them." It is, he hastened to add, a cruel and wasteful practice "unworthy of ... our best Southern traditions." Yet—ironically—it is a practice that Woodward's greatest work may be spared. Nearly 50 years after its publication, his magisterial *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* remains by far the most persuasive interpretation of its subject. His essays, on writers as diverse as the antebellum diarist Mary Boykin Chesnut and the troubled, somewhat extravagant modern Southern critic W.J. Cash, are as freshly contrarian today as when he wrote them decades ago.

And, even if, in the fullness of time, all of Vann Woodward's interpretations prove vain, his example of moral seriousness and integrity will continue to inspire, as will his devotion to craft. On December 16, home at last from a long hospital stay and eager to get back to work, he asked to be helped to his desk, which had been moved upstairs from his study. There, at his desk, he died the next day. ■

The closing of the Democratic mind.

Diminishing Returns

By MATTHEW MILLER

EVERY SO OFTEN a fact emerges in politics that, in Copernican fashion, renders established views of the cosmos obsolete. Sometimes these revelations come too late to affect public debate, as with John F. Kennedy's fraudulent "missile gap" in the 1960 presidential campaign or the belated discovery that Ronald Reagan actually increased the size of government. Now, however, after months of Al Gore blasting Bill Bradley's health plan as fiscally irresponsible and months of the press dutifully casting the debate as a showdown between Bradley's pricey liberal dream and Gore's more modest, centrist approach, there's a surprise. It turns out that Bradley's plan to cover uninsured Americans is a slightly *cheaper* version of the proposal offered by President Bush in 1992. The irony would be hilarious if it didn't prove how tragically seven years in the White House have shrunken Democratic ambition.

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First, the basics. Both Bradley's plan and the 1992 Bush plan subsidize families' private-insurance expenses via tax credits and deductions that taper off as income rises. Both also call for insurance-market reforms to let folks participate in larger risk pools that assure reasonable premiums (Bradley does this by broadening access to the health plans that serve federal employees; Bush did so with a series of reforms that accomplished something similar). To be sure, there are differences in how the credits are structured, and Bradley's plan is more generous toward uninsured kids. But "fundamentally the ideas are pretty similar," says David Cutler, the Harvard health economist who helped craft Bradley's plan. Former Bush advisers agree.

Bradley says his plan will cost $55 billion to $65 billion per year, but that includes a prescription-drug benefit for Medicare and public health measures unrelated to expanded coverage. Bradley's core plan would devote about $48 billion to insurance subsidies, with up to $5,000 going to each family. Bush's plan, when phased in, pledged $35 billion in 1992 dollars for such subsidies; adjusted for medical inflation, that's $48 billion today. Bush's top family subsidy of $3,750 is worth about $5,100 now. Given that Bush offered his plan during an era of huge budget deficits, it was without question more ambitious relative to its time.

But times have changed since Bush's budget director, Richard Darman, began quietly working on a health plan in 1991. After the 1990 budget deal, Darman became convinced that health care was the next frontier. Spiraling costs were wrecking the budget and swelling the ranks of the uninsured; Darman saw a way to kill two birds with one stone. "The common wisdom back then," recalls Thomas Scully, a former Darman aide who helped write the 1992 plan, was to cap the double-digit annual growth rates of Medicare and Medicaid at five percent and use the savings to finance universal coverage. Every serious plan to expand coverage—from Bush's to then-presidential-candidate Bob Kerry's to, eventually, Bill Clinton's—used this basic mechanism.

IN THE SUMMER of 1991, however, when Darman teed up the idea, Bush chief of staff John Sununu told him to forget it. The issue, he felt, wasn't ripe, and health care was a political loser for Republicans, anyway. Then came Harris Wofford's surprise health-care-inspired win in Pennsylvania's special Senate election. Suddenly health care was hot. The Bushies dusted off Darman's plan and rolled it out in February 1992. But "whatever credibility might have existed wasn't there," recalls Gail Wilensky, who then ran the Medicare program and worked on Bush's plan. By that point, she says, "it looked political."

Considering, however, that Bush's plan spent several times more on extending health coverage than Gore's current plan does, the Democratic reaction back then sounds truly farcical now. "The president is tinkering again at the margins," said Richard Gephardt. Democrats lambasted Bush for pledging "only" 96 percent coverage. (Bradley's present goal is 95 percent; Gore says his plan will raise coverage from today's 84 percent to 88 percent.) "I have never heard anything so ridiculous in my entire life," sputtered West Virginia Senator Jay Rockefeller, "as the concept of paying for [expanded]

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health insurance ... by putting a cap on Medicaid and Medicare." Rockefeller had apparently gotten comfortable with the notion by the time Hillary Clinton pushed a plan that did much the same thing a year and a half later.

As the decade ends, the ironies and missed opportunities only loom larger. First, as Scully points out, Medicare and Medicaid costs have come down dramatically, but not a penny of the savings went to expand coverage. Worse, the shift in the boundaries of the debate shows how far the left has retreated during this decade of its supposed political comeback. When a richly funded health care tax subsidy was offered by a Republican in an era of $250 billion deficits, Democrats trashed it as too little, too late. Now, when a Democrat offers basically the same plan in an era of equally outsized surpluses, Gore's top policy aide, Elaine Kamarck, sees it as evidence of a "reckless spending mentality."

It would be nice if reporters and debate moderators addressed these matters to Gore as the primaries draw near. For irony connoisseurs, meanwhile, the most fun comes if Bradley gets the nomination, in which case a major theme of the fall campaign will be Dubya blasting Dad's own health plan as socialist. Says Harvard's Cutler, with a sigh: "It shows you how the world has changed." ■

Great Falls Dispatch

Flight of Fancy

By Florence Williams

The teamsters in Great Falls, Montana, look pretty much like, well, teamsters: big shoulders, big mustaches, and big-checked plaid clothes. They gathered recently at the local Best Western to hear a man in a dark suit wax enthusiastic about the future of the state's economy. But it was a future not in mining, agriculture, Wal-Mart, or anything else one might expect from a state synonymous with pre-tech America. It was a future in aerospace. And the teamsters ate it up.

Mike Gold, the suited, bespectacled 26-year-old recently hired to head up the state Department of Commerce's one-man Montana Space Development Authority, pushed all the right buttons. Here is a chance, he said, for Montana to participate in the American imperative to dominate commercial aerospace. "Twenty years ago," thundered Gold, a former Washington, D.C., lobbyist and lifelong Trekkie, "the U.S. controlled one hundred percent of the commercial space market. Today we control twenty-six percent! Not only did we not win the space race, we are losing it and may have already!" Indeed, while NASA is busy losing Mars probes, France and Russia are sending up telecom satellites. So, according to Gold, it's Montana to the rescue.

Florence Williams is a writer in Montana.

The idea may sound far-fetched; Montanans tend to be more preoccupied with elk tags than with rocket science. But workers in Montana have been getting a bit desperate of late. They have watched the global economy destabilize the state's wheat production, mining, and timber sectors. Montana now ranks dead last among states in wages, and Montanans' sense of being left out of America's prosperity is palpable. This was once a land of mighty natural-resource companies and, with them, mighty unions. Now 80 percent of Montana businesses employ fewer than ten people.

Today, high-tech Montana is very much an oxymoron. With no major city (Billings, the largest, has a population of 92,000), the state seems too isolated, too cold, and too empty to attract the highly skilled workers an aerospace industry requires. Montana ranks forty-ninth (ahead of Wyoming) in its percentage of workers in high-tech industries. The state lies far enough outside the telecom umbrella that residents can't access AT&T or Sprint PCS "national" cellular-phone service. Many Montanans can't even receive local TV signals. There is no medical school. Exotic food—be it sushi or foie gras—is hard to come by. "We do have a significant giggle factor to overcome," concedes Gold. "The joke is, if you've got NASA and Montana in your job description, you're in trouble. For a time, national aerospace companies wouldn't even talk to an engineer with a Montana address."

But, ever the salesman, Gold says these seeming weaknesses are actually Montana's strengths. So far, no one on earth has designed a reusable launch vehicle, but a lot of people are trying. Montana's open spaces and low population density, Gold says, make it the perfect place for testing and retrieving faulty technology. (In other words, stuff won't fall on people.) The state's high altitude and high latitude make it cheaper to launch people or satellites into northern or polar orbits, including the orbit of the International Space Station, which may be a popular destination during the next decade. With fully reusable rockets and space planes, it will no longer be necessary to pitch fuel tanks and other parts into a nearby ocean. Hurricanes aren't a problem in Montana, and the Big Sky provides excellent flying weather. "If you add it all up," says Gold, "we are almost tailor-made for the space industry!"

Montana is so sure of these attributes that it has entered a competition to become one of two spaceports for Lockheed Martin's high-concept VentureStar, a reusable vehicle that might someday replace NASA's antediluvian space shuttle. The spaceport would employ 300 people, an almost dizzying figure here. Lockheed and NASA already plan to land a small-scale prototype, the X-33, at Great Falls's Malmstrom Air Force Base as well as at a federal facility in Utah. Says Tony Jacob, business development manager for Lockheed Martin, "We like the idea of flying it there [from California] because there are no major population centers along the route and it's mostly federal land." That's a gentle way of saying there's lots of empty terrain in which the craft could crash if necessary—a point of no small significance, since the X-33 has been plagued by technical problems from the get-go.

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Unfortunately for Montana's teamsters and other would-be space cadets, the competition for the futuristic helipad turns out to be pretty fierce. "We've got thirty-two candidate sites in fifteen states," Jacob says, diplomatically adding, "We're not ranking them yet." Indeed, Idaho, Utah, Washington, Oregon, and South Dakota share many of Montana's thin-air assets, and they may also have other ones, such as track records in aerospace and what Jacob politely calls "livability." After all, Great Falls still lags behind the rest of western Montana in terms of population growth—it gained only five people in 1998. Situated on the bleak plains along the Missouri River, it offers neither a major university nor sushi (that's in Missoula, two and a half hours away). Great Falls's largest employers include a pasta factory and a Mormon-owned supermarket chain. Its average January temperature is 21 degrees Fahrenheit.

STILL, THERE'S HOPE. Two major engineering firms in Montana are already doing aerospace work for NASA. Butte-based MSE, Inc., designs magnetic nozzles for deep-space vehicles. For that and a dozen other federally funded engineering projects, MSE provides 220 high-tech jobs. That's pretty good for a busted mining town best-known for its glowing green lake—a flooded open-pit mine that is part of the nation's largest Superfund site. The other company, Summit Design and Manufacturing in Helena, builds titanium and composite struts for the X-33 and for military aircraft. Summit has tried to attract out-of-state engineers, with mixed results. "Some people will take a pay cut and move here to work for us," says Summit's Keith Mize, who worked for Lockheed Martin in Texas. "But not everybody is ready to make that big a move. When I first got here, I complained about the lack of seafood restaurants. But I fish and hunt and hike. I love it here." Indeed, Montana's livability is really a matter of expectations: "Moscow is even colder than Butte, and it gets even more snow," says Vladimir Balepin, a renowned Russian rocket scientist whom MSE recently hired. "The people are friendly. I tried fishing but gave up because after many times I caught only one trout."

Meanwhile, Gold has begun courting privately funded rocket-makers Rotary Rocket and Kistler Aerospace. He even helped smooth the way—with enthusiastic assistance from Senator Conrad Burns—for a memorandum of intent between NASA and Rotary offering the company $20 million in federal facilities and equipment if it builds a new reusable launch engine in Montana. The booty could be attractive, since these days venture capitalists seem to prefer the Internet to wildcat rockets. Rotary is also working on a promising, if ungainly, vehicle that looks like a seven-story conehead wearing a helicopter-blade beanie. "We could very well launch the first manned private spacecraft from Montana," Gold gushes. "We in Montana settled the frontier once—let's do it again!"

The thought is appealing not just to idle, underpaid workers but to other land-loving Montanans weary of get-rich-quick schemes that exploit their state, like the recent geothermal-microbe-mining venture that a federal court recently suspended because of the threat it posed to Yellowstone National Park. Last fall, state voters banned cyanide heap-leach mining, effectively shutting down plans for a huge operation on the banks of the fabled Blackfoot River, not far from Ted Kaczynski's old address. It was a historic moment: the beginning of the end of Montana's long and sordid century of extractive industries. Last year, in a sort of poetic denouement, Montana mining stalwart W.R. Grace was found liable for poisoning workers over a 30-year period with asbestos-laced ore in Libby, Montana. The trouble is that nothing has replaced the extraction business—unless you count the small construction boom brought on by Californians building incongruent log palaces for weekend use. Next to that, a few busted rocket fins in a wheat field seem pretty appealing. Bring on the techno-geeks. Please. ■

Campaign Journal

Riding High

By DANA MILBANK

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

WHEN I FIRST met John McCain on the campaign trail, it was strictly a low-budget affair. There was only one other reporter—*The New Yorker*'s Joe Klein—and we sat in the back of a minivan with the candidate as his New England director drove us down a bumpy road to a small radio station. Along the way, John Weaver, McCain's national political director, shook his head while the candidate fired off one impolitic remark after another.

McCain's rise has been arguably the most exciting story of the campaign so far. And yet I kind of miss those early days when the Arizona senator was still a dark horse. In mid-December, Klein and I again found ourselves in the McCain entourage here in Cambridge, but this time we were joined by a battery of twelve cameras, a gaggle of reporters and political advisers, and a hall so packed with McCain admirers that OVERFLOW signs had to be posted outside to direct latecomers to a standing-room-only section. After the event, we piled onto McCain's coach, which was fully equipped with satellite television, fax machine, leather armchairs, kitchen, couch, and bathroom with shower and telephone. Two Norwegians, a team from National Public Radio, a man from ABC, and various other journalists crowded into the back of the bus to talk to McCain, forcing me, Klein, and a fellow from *The New York Times* to wait in front for our turns. When the appointed time came, a spokesman emerged to say, with mock gravity, "The senator will see you now."

McCain, who confesses he is fatigued by his endless chat sessions with an ever-growing corps of reporters, also feels a certain fondness for his early, less-popular days. "I remember it with great nostalgia," he says. That's no surprise. These days his aides' ears are constantly stuck to their cell phones,

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and the candidate and his advisers are surrounded at all hours by an insatiable press mob. Well-wishers climb aboard to shake the candidate's chapped hand. "It's a combination of 'The X-Files' and *The Boys on the Bus*," says Weaver, surveying the scene on the bus. Mark Salter, McCain's chief of staff, feels he's losing control of the press beast: "You can't move, you can't go to the head, you can't signal McCain to shut up."

NOT THAT THESE guys are complaining. The McCain campaign has gone from obscurity to front-runner status in New Hampshire in just a couple of months. Early on, McCain's candidacy was fueled by a clever notion: provide abundant access to reporters, and you'll get a bonanza of free publicity. But with the rising poll numbers, crowds, and financial contributions come an unwieldy press corps and a cumbersome, full-fledged campaign complete with baggage calls, filing times, and press passes. Now McCain is suddenly confronting a new problem: how to behave like a scrappy insurgent when you're the favorite—at least in New Hampshire.

McCain is surrounded at all times by cameras, microphones, reporters, and supporters demanding autographs. The minivan has been replaced by two coach buses. McCain's bus, dubbed the "Straight Talk Express" and painted with the campaign's logo, is now often trailed by a press bus, nicknamed "Bullshit One" by staff wags. Reporters are given laminated "credentials" to wear around their necks to identify them as part of McCain's traveling entourage. At an event in New Hampshire not long ago, Todd Harris, a McCain aide, proudly showed me the lengthy manifest for the next day's bus tour, including such luminaries as the "CBS Evening News" anchor. "Dan Rather!" Harris gushed. "On the bus manifest!"

The crush reflects McCain's dramatically altered position. His fund-raising has picked up sharply. He has collected $20 million, including $1 million in just one week in late December. This allows him to advertise more extensively on television and radio in the early-primary states. The surge in money has been fueled by McCain's rise in the polls in New Hampshire, where he now appears to have a small lead over Texas Governor George W. Bush. McCain has also cut Bush's lead in Michigan, and polls indicate that were McCain to win a few early primaries, he would run neck and neck with Bush elsewhere in the country—suggesting that Bush may not be as invincible as advertised. This, in turn, has forced the smug and aloof Bush to enter the fray, exchanging daily barbs with McCain.

The Arizona senator, as a result, is suddenly a New Hampshire tourist attraction. Motorists flash their lights and wave as the McCain bus wheels into each small town. When the candidate disembarked in New London to address an afternoon crowd of 500, he was so swarmed by supporters that when Salter tapped him on the shoulder, McCain turned, grinned, and shook his hand—at first not realizing it was his own chief of staff. At an earlier event, a woman approached McCain from behind, touched his back, and shrieked, "Ooh, I touched him!" On a recent McCain visit to New Hampshire, I spied the candidate's advance man, Lanny, giving tours of the candidate's bus to a group of bar patrons—at midnight. Earlier, at a campaign finance event with Bill Bradley, McCain climbed off his bus with about 15 journalists and ten aides as a crowd of 50 more journalists, photographers, and soundmen recorded the moment.

MCCAIN INC. HAS become so huge a conglomerate that the candidate risks losing the "authenticity" label that has propelled him so far. He is another big-time pol now. He doesn't hold events; he performs "stunts." "How can you, with a straight face, say this is not a political stunt?" was the first question out of Ted Koppel's mouth as he moderated the McCain/Bradley campaign finance event in Claremont New Hampshire. It was a stunt, to be sure, although the blame was as much Koppel's and ABC's as McCain's. The evergreen woods in the TV background turned out to be potted shrubs. When there was a technical glitch, Koppel told the candidates to repeat their answers, saying, "We can pretend that none of this happened." Who's performing stunts now, Ted?

But Ted Koppel doesn't need to come off as an ordinary guy. By contrast, a politics-as-usual appearance could blunt McCain's challenge as he enters the political big-time. His appeal depends in large part on his ability to talk directly and frankly with reporters, who then give him favorable coverage. And he is struggling mightily to keep this up. When I hitched a ride on the Straight Talk Express, McCain was obviously tired; when the bus took a wrong turn, the candidate lost any hope of getting some downtime without reporters before his next event. "I'm keenly aware [that] the fundamental mistakes of campaigns are done under fatigue," he said. Still, he added, "I can't change. The one thing is, don't change." And so, since he doesn't have time to service all the eager journalists these days, he rotates them through his bus—and some must settle for conversations with his staff. He has so far refused security, another potential barrier between him and the press. "I won't take security. I don't need it . . . I don't want it," he told me.

The senator's laid-back personal style is about to collide with presidential-contender reality. But McCain keeps trying. As reporters crowded around him on the bus, he went through his usual shtick, as he had 100 times before. He talked on the phone with his wife and children. He clowned with his aides. And he didn't refuse a single question—even when a Norwegian reporter asked, "Are women interested in you?" He talked about sports ("I'd watch the Thumb-suckers play the Bed Wetters") and about his dislike for the French ("Queen Victoria said the poor will always be with us. Well, the French will always be with us"). When a reporter asked him how he keeps up his energy, he deadpanned: "I throw a temper tantrum." I asked if it helped to hurl chairs. "Throw a few chairs, bust a window, beat up on my wife," he said. The reporters dutifully scribbled it down. McCain's spokesman, overhearing his boss, put his hand to his face and shook his head in disbelief. For a moment, it felt like old times: we were back in the minivan, McCain was still in single digits, and everybody was having fun. ■

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Aceh Dispatch

Breaking Away

By VAUDINE ENGLAND

AS THE WORLD now knows, East Timor did not come by its independence easily. When the tiny province voted last year to secede from Indonesia, military gangs backed by the Jakarta regime went on a rampage, killing thousands of people and displacing many more. Even today, with an international peacekeeping force on the ground, more than 100,000 East Timorese live in camps in West Timor, terrorized by Jakarta-backed militias.

Abdul Muthalib knows this, too, which makes what he is about to say all the more strange. Muthalib is a retired schoolteacher who lives in Banda Aceh, capital of the predominantly Muslim province of Aceh, which is located on the opposite end of Indonesia's sprawling island nation from East Timor. He's sitting in a coffee shop where men gather for caffeine and talk. And today, amid the familiar smell of cloves and cigarette smoke, he is explaining why Aceh must follow East Timor's lead and vote for freedom. "I don't want what happened in East Timor to happen in Aceh," he assures me, "but, if we can have independence, why not?"

He's not alone. Across the province, pro-independence sentiment is on the rise. On November 8, nearly one million Achenese gathered peacefully at Banda Aceh's main mosque, demanding a referendum on their future. Days later, they raised an independence flag to commemorate the twenty-third anniversary of the founding of the Free Aceh guerrilla movement, known here as the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM). Indonesia's new government, the first democratic regime in more than 40 years, is trying desperately to keep Aceh in the fold—in part because of the province's rich oil and gas industry and in part because Aceh was (during the thirteenth century) the first region in Indonesia to embrace Islam, which makes it especially important to the religiously sensitive Jakarta government.

Yet the Achenese seem determined to move forward, and that means Indonesia is about to enter a new, even more volatile period—at just the moment that the Western media have turned off their cameras to think the story over. Aceh's independence movement could lead to a freer, less centralized Indonesia. It could also usher in a new age of authoritarianism, if Jakarta digs in its heels. Or it could even spell the end of the nation altogether.

Aceh has a long history of staging rebellions (and having them thwarted), a history that predates independent Indonesia. For 30 years, Aceh resisted Dutch colonial rule. And, after the Dutch left in 1945, the province transferred its animosity to its new overlords in Jakarta, revolting openly from 1953 to 1957.

In 1959, Jakarta promised Aceh virtual autonomy in religion, law, and education. But the promise was never kept. Instead, government soldiers took control of local politics and legal and illegal business, including the illicit marijuana trade. With the declaration of Aceh as a "Daerah Operasi Militer" ("Military Operations Area") in 1989, Indonesia subjected the province to formal martial law, ushering in an era of gross human rights violations. Indonesian troops regularly dragged Achenese from their homes. Torture techniques ranged from pulling fingernails to administering electric shocks to thrusting iron bars into orifices. Soldiers raped wives and daughters. People mysteriously disappeared. Human rights investigators have documented 5,000 cases of abuse, and the true number is probably much higher.

While this went on, Mobil and the state oil firm, Pertamina, profited mightily from Aceh's rich oil and gas resources. But the Achenese themselves saw little direct benefit from these resources, in part because most of them had too little education to get oil-company jobs. Most of the money pumped from Aceh's soil went to Jakarta (or out of Indonesia altogether), while the Achenese continued to wallow in poverty.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, YEARS of brutal oppression and economic exploitation radicalized a new generation of Achenese. And this new generation's moment arrived with the fall of President Suharto in May 1998 and the gradual unraveling of central authority that followed. Exiled Achenese leaders in Sweden and Malaysia began funneling more money and guns to the Achenese rebels; many exiles made the return voyage to Aceh, swelling the ranks of the GAM. The Indonesian army responded by massacring about 50 civilians in May 1999 and another 51 in July—all in broad daylight.

Separatist fervor has escalated with each new abuse and with Jakarta's persistent failure to punish the offenders. Today the countryside is in disarray: local government in Aceh is almost entirely in the hands of the GAM. For the moment, the Indonesian armed forces have pulled back from the villages, but they are threatening reprisals. (Some speculate that the soldiers actually encourage GAM attacks in order to turn public opinion against the rebels.) Mobil has stopped oil work in the province. Javanese and Christian Batak settlers are fleeing, fearful of the GAM's ethnic violence, while the local Chinese business community watches nervously from the relatively secure town of Medan, the large business center of Sumatra just outside Aceh's boundaries.

Not surprisingly, tens of thousands of Achenese villagers have reacted to the turmoil by abandoning their homes and seeking safe haven in local mosques across the province. Many of them fear that Aceh will turn into another East Timor, though independent reports show that these movements of "internally displaced persons," as they are known, are not purely voluntary; they are part of a broad GAM strategy to generate international sympathy for the group's cause.

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Even the onset of Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, has not tempered rebel feelings. The GAM has promised ongoing violence against the "colonizers" from Java, while the pro-independence student movement continues to agitate for a more peaceful solution—that is, a referendum.

INDONESIA'S NEWLY INSTALLED civilian president, Abdurrahman Wahid, has tried to show the Achenese that he is determined both to stop the violence and to give Aceh some measure of autonomy. One of Wahid's first acts in office was to appoint Achenese human rights advocate Hasballah Saad as Indonesia's first-ever minister for human rights. And Wahid has even indicated he'd allow a vote on independence. On November 4, he declared, "I support a referendum as their right. If we can do that in East Timor, why not in Aceh? But the question is when it will be held." Less than two weeks later, while in Tokyo, Wahid was even more specific: "The plan now is to have the referendum on Aceh six months after the ending of the current situation"—which presumably could mean holding it as early as June.

But Wahid's referendum talk is probably a ploy. If he ever gave the province true independence, factions in the armed forces would almost certainly move against him. Wahid's only recourse would be to appeal to the Indonesian public and try to purge the military from politics altogether—an extremely dangerous course of action in a country dominated for decades by generals.

Wahid's real strategy is to stall, build trust among the Achenese, and then negotiate a settlement to keep the province in the fold. According to government sources, Wahid would like to demonstrate accountability by hauling in generals for questioning about Aceh and prosecuting a few of them for the most blatant abuses. Wahid would then hurry new regional autonomy laws through parliament and speedily implement a recently promised revenue split under which 75 percent of Aceh's wealth would remain in the province.

Whether the Achenese would accept such a plan, though, is unclear. It is almost impossible to know how much Achenese pro-independence sentiment is heartfelt and how much simply reflects GAM influence. "I think not everyone wants independence here," ruminates Father Ferdinando, Banda Aceh's sole Catholic priest. "But GAM propaganda is so high, it is hard to know the real feeling of the people."

If Wahid can't broker a quick autonomy deal and reneges on an independence referendum, Aceh is headed for months, and probably years, of violence between the military and the rebels, as each side tries to wear the other down and cast the other side as the aggressor. Indeed, the only thing currently preventing an all-out conflagration is the risk that such a fight would entail for both sides: the GAM doesn't want to provoke Jakarta into committing sufficient military resources to topple the rebels; Jakarta doesn't want to commit the resources, fearing a public backlash.

Given Indonesia's terrible economic problems and the difficulty of negotiating with the Achenese, Wahid may be tempted to put the province on the back burner. But he dare not do so, because within Indonesia are many potential Acehs. Unrest is starting to bubble up elsewhere on the archipelago—Irian Jaya, East Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, and other provinces. People in those areas will be watching the developments in Aceh closely. In the past, Indonesia's leaders kept a lid on separatism with brute force, and within the military establishment there are many who would resort to the same means of control now. But, with the cold war over, Indonesians'—and the world's—tolerance for such thuggery has diminished. Such tactics, tried today, could turn Indonesia into Yugoslavia writ large. Whether Wahid can find a better way will help determine whether Indonesia survives as a democracy. Indeed, it will determine whether it survives at all. ■

London Dispatch

Blair Witched

By JONATHAN FREEDLAND

EVER SINCE BRITONS elected the smiling, open-necked Tony Blair on a day of uncharacteristic British sunshine in 1997, progress toward a new, American style of public life has seemed unstoppable. For one thing, there's Blair's "presidential" style, reinforced by the brainy glamour of his lawyer wife Cherie Booth—whom the press has dubbed Britain's Hillary Clinton. Together, the couple has Camelotized Downing Street, where Booth hosts seminars for intellectual luminaries and cocktail parties for the artists and musicians of the hour. Next spring, as if to complete the Kennedyesque picture, the Blairs are expecting a baby—the first toddler in Number Ten for a century and a half.

The language of governance has become American, too. Britain now employs a drug czar, seeks to move the unemployed from welfare to work, and boasts a working-family tax credit that is really just a more euphonious version of President Clinton's Earned Income Tax Credit. In the words of the liberal pundit Andrew Marr, Washington has a new suburb: London.

But there's now a barrier in the path of Washington's transatlantic urban sprawl, and it sits right in the heart of the British capital. London, along with other nettlesome parts of the United Kingdom, is exposing the difficulty of grafting American political practices onto the British body politic. The tension between Blair's wish to inject U.S.-style zing into British governance and his equal desire to run the government with the kind of discipline possible only in an un-American parliamentary system has begun to create headaches for New Labour. Some see in this tension the beginning of tremors that could ultimately bring down the Blair government.

The root of the trouble is a promise Blair inherited from his predecessor as Labour leader, John Smith, who died

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suddenly in 1994. Smith committed Labour to a program of devolution—that is, devolving power away from the central government in London. As a gesture toward the beloved (and Scottish) Smith, Blair pledged to incorporate that plan into his own program and followed up by giving the Scots their first parliament in 300 years. But devolution was not limited to the more than five million people of Scotland. It also meant a new assembly for Wales, another for Northern Ireland, and a new authority to govern London itself. None of these large, distinct areas had previously enjoyed any measure of self-rule. On the contrary, they had been governed, often down to the smallest detail, by politicians and bureaucrats in Whitehall.

The London case was, in some ways, the most striking. The city used to have its own authority—the Greater London Council (GLC)—but when that body fell into the hands of a left-wing firebrand, Labour's Ken Livingstone, Margaret Thatcher promptly abolished it. Such are the titanic powers available to a British prime minister: it is as if Clinton simply abolished the office of New York mayor at a stroke because Rudy Giuliani irritated him. The Blair government decided to right Thatcher's wrong, which had acquired mythic status in the collective memory of Londoners. But Labour would not simply revive the old GLC. Instead, it would establish a directly elected, U.S.-style mayoralty for the city. With that one decision, Blair created the biggest problem of his premiership.

The British political class immediately realized that the mayoralty would represent a political prize unprecedented in British history. Even the prime minister enjoys the mandate only of the constituents who elect him to Parliament. Now there would be a pol who could plausibly claim the direct, personal backing of five million voters. After the presidents of France and Portugal, the mayor of London would have the largest direct mandate of any politician in Europe.

Candidates began lining up. The best-selling novelist and former Conservative member of Parliament Jeffrey Archer declared his interest in the Tory nomination even before the office was officially created. (He would later win the nomination, only to drop out following revelations that he had asked a friend to lie during a libel trial.) But the real action was on the Labour side. Glenda Jackson, the Oscar-winning actress who had quit the stage to become an MP, abandoned her job as a junior transport minister to seek the Labour nomination. And so, too, did a face from London's past: Livingstone.

In 1987, following the abolition of the GLC, the man once demonized as "Red Ken" won a seat in the House of Commons. But he did not prosper there; not only was Labour in opposition, but Livingstone also found himself out of step with his party's new direction. While Blair and his team insisted on dragging Labour toward the center, Livingstone remained unrepentantly on the left. He refused to apologize for his five years on the GLC, during which he happily bestowed cash grants on gay and lesbian groups and spoke in favor of the PLO. Nor did he express regret about meeting Gerry Adams, the leader of the Irish Republican Army's political wing, Sinn Fein, at a time when the IRA was still planting bombs on London's streets.

Red Ken stood for everything Blair was against. In the Blairite view, the GLC's "loony left" politics had helped keep Labour out of office for 18 years. Today, when the prime minister talks about the wilderness days of the early '80s, he verges on the obsessive. "I was there," he says, a slight glint in his eyes. "And, so long as I'm the leader of the Labour Party, we're never going back."

The trouble is, Labourites in London—and Londoners in general—don't see it that way. Their memories of the GLC include happy ones, like the cuts in bus and Tube fares, the free-of-charge weekend arts festivals, and Livingstone's plucky stance against Thatcher. Though nearly two decades have passed, the most recent poll, published in the *Guardian*, showed Livingstone ahead of his nearest rival by a staggering 38 percent.

Watch Livingstone for a couple of hours and you under-

AFP

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stand his appeal. He uses public transportation, which is unusual for a politician, straphanging on the Tube with a down-to-earth quality that warms London hearts. He is anything but polished. For anybody else, his nasal, adenoidal voice, combined with his deadpan delivery, would be a liability. But in this race it works to his advantage. To borrow another Americanism, these features lend him an air of authenticity. His "cheekie chappie" patter, with a good dose of self-deprecating humor, always goes down well. "Can I kiss you?" gushes one female Labourite at a recent party event. "If you really want to," drones Livingstone. Later, mobbed by photographers, the candidate promises to walk slowly so that they can all get their pictures. "I'd understand if I was a supermodel," jokes Livingstone, whose flat, square face is unlikely to land him any shoots with Kate Moss.

But Livingstone's most reliable gags are usually at the expense of his own Labour Party. "I've just come from voting against the government," he proudly tells one audience after defying Labour over a reduction in disability benefits; then he takes a shot at two of Blair's most trusted ministers. Livingstone is playing one of Britain's favorite characters—the rebel—and he can do it because Blair seems so bent on stopping him.

THE CAMPAIGN TO block Livingstone has not been easy. None of the original declared candidates, including Jackson, were polling anywhere close to him. So in October Blair strong-armed one of his most reliable heavyweights, then-Health Secretary Frank Dobson, out of the Cabinet and pressed him to run.

Dobson, 59 years old and a bruiser of the old school, is nobody's patsy—but he was damaged by the instant perception that he was Blair's puppet. Even with Dobson in the race, polls showed that Livingstone would walk away with the nomination if it were decided by a straight primary vote. So the Labour apparatchiks looked for another way to choose their candidate. Even though Blair had become leader by arguing passionately for an end to machine politics—and in favor of a "one member, one vote" policy—Labour headquarters announced on October 12, the very day Dobson made his candidacy official, that an electoral college would choose the mayoral nominee. Under the new system, MPs and the like—who are almost entirely loyal to Blair—would count for one-third of the total vote, while union members, whose leaders are putty in the hands of the sitting Labour prime minister, would count for another third. The votes of the 69,000 actual members of the London Labour Party would count for the last third.

Everybody saw the gimmick for what it was. Under this system, even if Livingstone won the votes of 95 percent of card-carrying Labourites, he could still lose the nomination. Yet, amazingly, internal party polling still suggested that Livingstone might squeak through. So Labour threw up another obstacle: on November 16, it decided to haul Livingstone, Dobson, and Jackson before a party selection committee to see if they were fit merely to be on a short list of candidates. Glenda and "Dobbo," as Dobson is known, sailed through. But Livingstone's appearance before the inquisition lasted nearly four hours. The committee wanted him to recant his opposition to Labour government policy on raising (private) money for the London Underground. He refused, arguing that it was his very insistence that the Tube stay in public hands that had made him so popular among Londoners. After a second interview two days later, the committee backed down.

Now Blair has fallen back on his weapon of last resort: invective. The prime minister and his allies are dumping everything they've got on Livingstone's candidacy. They've held off-the-record briefings to suggest that Livingstone is a self-serving egotist whose thirst for media attention has earned him the hatred and distrust of colleagues. And, with Labour members voting by mail from now until February 16, the attacks have become more public. In December the prime minister addressed a series of town-meeting-style gatherings in London, casting Livingstone as the great untouchable and pleading with Labourites not to plunge the party back into the extremist mire of the '80s.

BLAIR'S PROBLEM IS that he has transplanted a clutch of American institutions onto a political culture that finds them alien. He has the plant but not the soil. So he introduces an office that requires an independent individual—the mayoralty—yet demands that this individual conform to parliamentary-style party discipline. The contradiction first surfaced in Wales, where Blair insisted on handpicking the leader himself, and it is now exploding in London. It is making a leader who has actually given away more power than any other British prime minister in history look like a control freak. An unholy alliance of the party's left-wingers and Britain's right-leaning press is bashing the decentralizer as a Stalinist. Blair is becoming to devolution what Henry Ford was to consumer choice: "You can have whatever candidate you want—so long as he's mine."

It is this tension—giving away power but retaining control—that pessimists fear could be Blair's undoing. And he knows it. While other world leaders fretted about the demise of the World Trade Organization, Blair barely had time to concentrate on the battle for Seattle. He spent part of that week cooped up in a hall in Brixton, in south London, arguing with a thousand members of his own party—fighting a war that should have ended a decade ago.

And, even if the Blairites win the primary, the bloodletting could pave the way for the resurgence of the now-comatose Tories. The mayoral election itself, to be held on May 4, will be the first major test of public opinion before the next general election, which Blair will probably call a year later. If Livingstone loses the primary, Labour's victory over the Conservative nominee is by no means assured. The Tory favorite, former transport minister Steve Norris, could well beat Dobson. Some suspect that Blair would prefer a Tory win rather than allow Livingstone to use the new London city hall the way he used the old GLC—as a platform to attack the national government of the day. That would be a serious risk, giving the Conservatives real momentum going into a national election. But Blair appears willing to accept it. It seems that giving succor to the enemy of the future is a price worth paying to destroy an enemy of the past. ■

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The man behind the anti-free-trade revolt.

Silent Partner

By Ryan Lizza

I'm on the phone with Mike Dolan, the Public Citizen activist who led the charge against the World Trade Organization in Seattle a month ago. The lefty Dolan is packing for a much-needed vacation to (where else?) Cuba as he banters in his friendly, Jesse Ventura-esque voice about his yearlong effort to bring the anti-free-trade movement to the Pacific Northwest. "I was the first one out there," he says. "I pulled together a whole lot of people." Suddenly we're interrupted. "I'm sorry; I have to put you on hold for a second," he says. Three minutes later, he's back on the line, telling me he can no longer talk with me. His boss, Lori Wallach, chief Washington lobbyist for Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, has just instructed him to end our on-the-record conversation. "You and I," he says, "are about to go on deep background, OK?"

What's the problem? Something that has been whispered about on the left for some time now: the suspicion that Roger Milliken—billionaire textile magnate from South Carolina, founding member of the conservative movement, and patron of right-wing causes for almost 50 years—has been quietly financing the anti-globalization efforts of Public Citizen and related organizations. "This is the dirty little secret in the anti-free-trade crowd," says one prominent left-of-center activist. If it's true, then a man who once banned Xerox copiers from his offices because the company sponsored a documentary about civil rights played a key role in filling the streets of Seattle with protesters in December. "They were out there [in Seattle] months in advance. They were paying for offices and computers. Where did all that money come from?" asks one economist whose organization is a member of Citizens Trade Campaign, the anti-globalization coalition of environmental, labor, and other progressive groups dominated by Public Citizen. Milliken, Public Citizen, and the Citizens Trade Campaign all give the same answer when asked about a financial relationship: they will neither confirm nor deny it. But what is clear is that Milliken's decade-long fight against free trade is finally bearing fruit.

Never heard of Roger Milliken? You're not alone. His name is unfamiliar even to most political junkies. But, to historians of conservatism, Milliken is synonymous with the rise of the American right. From Barry Goldwater to Ronald Reagan to Newt Gingrich, from the John Birch Society to *National Review* to the Heritage Foundation, Milliken has been a key financial backer at every juncture. He has a history of picking winners—candidates, journals, and think tanks that have shaped American politics.

All of which makes his ideological shift so striking. In recent years Milliken has shed his financial ties to mainstream conservatism, choosing to lavish his millions on nationalist causes instead. From the battle against NAFTA to the street warfare in Seattle to the Pat Buchanan presidential campaigns, the anti-globalization eruptions of the 1990s have seemed disparate and ad hoc. But Milliken has been a major player behind each one, and, unlike most of his new allies, he has the means and the experience to build the infrastructure of an American political movement. If the anti-free-trade turbulence of last fall leads in the coming years to a genuine nationalist counter-establishment—complete with intellectuals, magazines, lobbyists, and legislators—it will be largely the work of one practically invisible man. A man who has built a counter-establishment once before.

It's often said that William F. Buckley and Barry Goldwater are, respectively, the intellectual and political co-fathers of modern conservatism. Milliken financed both men before most Americans knew them as conservative icons. In 1954, when Buckley was trying to scrape together half a million dollars to start *National Review*, Milliken was one of a dozen people invited to a dinner where Buckley pitched the idea for his new conservative journal. A Yale University alum like Buckley, Milliken committed the largest single contribution ($20,000), and he became one of *National Review*'s few corporate sponsors in the magazine's early years. To this day his South Carolina textile firm, Milliken & Co., runs a full-page ad in each issue.

Milliken helped launch Goldwater's career, as well. At the 1960 Republican convention in Chicago, although Richard Nixon was sure to win, Milliken led a band of conservatives who bluntly informed the reluctant Goldwater that, with or without his permission, he was going to be nominated. In 1961, Milliken and 21 other conservatives began a successful movement to draft Goldwater in 1964. Milliken was the wealthiest man among them and became one of Goldwater's most significant benefactors. Former South Carolina Governor Jim Edwards says matter-of-factly, "Roger was responsible for getting Goldwater the nomination in 1964."

Edwards also credits Milliken with rebuilding the Republican Party in the South: "I've said many times that Roger Milliken will never get the credit that's due him." Milliken was instrumental in convincing Strom Thurmond to switch from the Democratic Party to the GOP, a switch that instantly made it respectable for conservative Southerners to vote Republican. Milliken was also a major financial backer of Nixon's 1968 Southern Strategy, the plan, run by hardball political operative Harry Dent, under which Nixon won the South with a racially tinged appeal. "If there had been no

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Roger Milliken," says Dent, "it would have been very difficult to pull off what we did." And Edwards has his old friend Milliken to thank for helping him become, in 1974, the first Republican governor of South Carolina in 100 years. But, despite his indispensable philanthropy, Milliken has remained in the shadows. "He's the guy that stays behind the scenes," says Dent. "You couldn't see him out there directly in politics." Adds the Heritage Foundation's Lee Edwards, "He's even more quiet and off-the-record and afraid of interviews than Mr. [Richard Mellon] Scaife." (Sure enough, my requests for an interview with Milliken for this story were rebuffed.)

Given Milliken's long, ultraconservative history, it's hardly a surprise that many leftists cringe at the thought of forming alliances with him today. Indeed, Ralph Nader, the unions, and the environmentalists have all gone head-to-head with him in the past. Milliken is notoriously anti-labor, establishing that credential in 1956 by shutting down his Darlington, South Carolina, plant after his workers voted to unionize. He then fought his former workers for 25 years before being forced to give them $5 million in back pay, by which time 144 of them had died.

THOMAS FUCHS

Milliken has fought Nader, too. In the early '70s, Nader launched an attack on the textile industry, accusing manufacturers like Milliken of "unparalleled obstruction" and "political pressure to suppress the results" of studies showing that thousands of textile workers were developing a fatal disease known as "brown lung." But, instead of issuing new Occupational Safety and Health Administration guidelines on exposure to the cotton dust that causes the disease, the Nixon administration used the issue to raise campaign funds. The textile industry gave Nixon almost $1 million for his 1972 campaign, and, according to *The Washington Post*, Milliken personally delivered $363,000 in hard cash and checks from textile executives to Nixon's campaign finance director hours before a new law requiring public disclosure of such contributions went into effect. The *Post* referred to the incident as a "little-known part of Watergate." The government would not issue a cotton-dust standard until the Ford administration, when Nader's Public Citizen filed suit.

But, in the era of globalization, these partisan battles are ancient history, relics of the cold war. If Milliken's political philosophy was once driven by anti-communism, today he's animated by protectionism and nationalism. Milliken's move away from free trade began in the 1980s. Or, more accurately—since the textile industry has long been one of the most protected industries in America—in the mid-'80s official Washington began to move away from Milliken. In 1984, the Heritage Foundation—perhaps the most significant conservative institution in the country, and one that Milliken had showered with annual six-figure donations almost since its founding—refused to support Congress's plan to further limit textile imports. Milliken immediately pulled his funding. "He went from $200,000 a year to zero," says John Von Kannon, Heritage's vice president.

Milliken was also rebuffed by Reagan, the man he had supported for president since 1976. In 1987, Milliken met with Pat Buchanan, then Reagan's communications director, in the White House and implored him to persuade Reagan not to veto a textile quota bill. Buchanan snarled at Milliken, telling him he was "in the office of the stoutest free trader in the West Wing," save Reagan himself. Reagan vetoed the bill.

So, in the late '80s, Milliken turned to the next rising conservative star: Newt Gingrich. Milliken was one of the small circle of wealthy donors who funded Gingrich's influential GOPAC (he gave $255,000). He and his company were rewarded with gushing praise in Gingrich's lecture series "Renewing American Civilization" and his book *To Renew America*. Milliken had built "the most successful textile company in the world," Gingrich told his students in a lecture devoted partly to Milliken's corporate philosophy. More importantly, Gingrich occasionally championed protectionist legislation for Milliken, and in 1990 the two men were spotted huddling together outside the House chambers plotting their strategy on an important textile bill. But Gingrich's protectionism was half-hearted and short-lived.

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He soon became an ardent backer of NAFTA and GATT, and Milliken dropped his support.

In the early '90s, scorned by so many former allies, Milliken had a revelation. He could no longer simply fund conservatives in the hope that they'd support protectionism. He needed to build institutions (right, left, or center) that saw protectionism as their primary identity. He teamed up with former Reagan Commerce Department official Clyde Prestowitz in 1990 to start the Economic Strategy Institute (ESI), a think tank funded by labor and business groups and, in its early days, hundreds of thousands of Milliken's dollars. Milliken even moved his Washington office out of Heritage's building and into ESI's. Prestowitz and economist Alan Tonelson began laying the groundwork for what they hoped would become the economic-nationalist alternative to Heritage and the Cato Institute. "We thought we had a major institution created in the early '90s," says Tonelson, who is probably the most significant economist spreading the nationalist gospel.

But Prestowitz, after coauthoring economic-nationalist tracts with Tonelson, split from the Milliken camp and eventually backed NAFTA and the Uruguay Round of GATT. Once again, Milliken had been betrayed. He pulled his funding from ESI. Tonelson moved on to the U.S. Business and Industrial Council (USBIC), founded in the 1930s to fight the New Deal and the closest thing to a serious economic-nationalist think tank that exists today. Milliken, of course, is USBIC's most significant donor. In 1992, Milliken also helped start the Manufacturing Policy Project by giving $120,000 to Pat Choate, the 1996 Reform Party vice presidential candidate who recently orchestrated Buchanan's flight from the Republican Party.

CHOATE AND TONELSON, who see themselves not as conservatives or liberals but as economic nationalists, are key players in Milliken's burgeoning empire. Another is Jock Nash, Milliken's full-time Washington lobbyist. Nash was the best man at Choate's wedding and is a regular guest on Choate's radio show. He is also a close friend of Bay Buchanan, Pat's sister and chief strategist. Nash is a legendary fount of anti-free-trade information. Activists on both the left and the right speak highly of his daily e-mail dispatches summarizing the day's trade news. "I probably get fifteen e-mail messages from him a day," says one union activist. "It's incredibly valuable." And, just as Nash has linked the Buchananites and the Perotistas, he also connects the Buchananites and the Naderites.

During the 1993 NAFTA battle, for instance, Nash organized the anti-NAFTA strategy sessions known as the "No-name Group," which included a Nader representative, congressional aides from the right and the left, and others fighting the legislation. *The Wall Street Journal* described the meetings as sometimes "xenophobic" gatherings where imported wine was banned and anti-Mexican banter was not unusual.

During the last decade of trade fights, Nash has forged a close alliance with Wallach, Public Citizen's top trade lobbyist. When Maude Barlow, a leading progressive anti-free-trade activist from Canada, came to Washington for a conference four years ago, she says she was picked up for a meeting by a man sent by Wallach. As she talked with her driver, Barlow was struck by his conservative rhetoric. "I thought, who is this man?" she says. "Why is this man driving me somewhere?" Barlow says the man was Nash. "He said something about Roger Milliken, and I said, 'Who's Roger Milliken?'" Says Chip Berlet, an analyst at Political Research Associates who charts right-wing influence on lefty groups: "It's a little strange—you come down to visit Nader and Milliken's lobbyist picks you up."

THE NADERITES EXPLAIN their relationship with Milliken simply as smart politics, a "tactical alliance" no different from Senators John McCain and Russ Feingold working together on campaign finance reform. But some in the labor community complain that the relationship is not simply about tactics; it's about a shared worldview. "What is Lori Wallach's or Ralph Nader's positive agenda for the global economy?" wonders one labor official. "At times it seems to me to be not that different from Buchanan's view."

Nash himself speaks effusively of Nader. When I ask him what he thinks of the sniping about Nader and Milliken working together, he says: "I met Ralph Nader and I was so impressed. I had grown up being taught that Ralph Nader was the devil. OK? And that he didn't like the capitalist free-enterprise system. And he didn't like this and he didn't like that. And then I met him and I saw him up close. And I said, 'My God, this is a man with courage. This is a man with enormous intellect. And he's honest.' Courage, intellect, honesty? Excuse me, but that's the same thing Roger Milliken is!... When Mr. Milliken met him ... through the whole meeting these two men were like Velcro to one another. They sat together, talked together, bounced ideas off one another. It was incredible."

As for Nader, he chuckles at Nash's description of the two men's encounter and downplays any relationship with Milliken. "I wouldn't call it a relationship," he says. During the fight over NAFTA, "I had about two or three meetings with people both on the right and the left with Roger Milliken being there," he adds. Nader is understandably coy about his association with the South Carolina textile magnate, but he and Milliken have fought together on every significant trade battle this decade. And Milliken is one of the few right-wing corporate titans Nader doesn't denounce. As far back as 1992, Nader and Nash got together to watch the famous NAFTA debate between Ross Perot and Al Gore on "Larry King Live." And they will certainly team up to fight the coming battle over permanent normal trading relations with China.

As further evidence that Milliken has made inroads on the nationalist left, some point to Dolan, Public Citizen's field director for trade issues. When Buchanan announced his decision to run for president last March, Dolan wrote in an e-mail on Public Citizen's private trade-strategy discussion group, "[W]hatever else you say about Pat Buchanan, he will be the only candidate in the 2000 presidential

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sweepstakes who will passionately and unconditionally defend the legitimate expectations of working families in the global economy." The subject line of the e-mail read, "Trade Patriot Buchanan." Others report that, privately, Nader has spoken positively of a Buchanan candidacy, arguing that Buchanan will raise important global-economy issues rather than dwelling on social issues.

Indeed, Buchanan's Reform Party candidacy, with its $12.6 million in federal matching funds, is the spark that could light all the institutional tinder that Milliken has been constructing for more than a decade. Milliken is Buchanan's most generous benefactor. In 1994, he gave the nonprofit organizations that Buchanan and his sister Bay operate in between presidential campaigns, American Cause and Coalition for the American Cause, a staggering $2.2 million. Buchanan used the money to buy $1 million in anti-GATT TV advertisements and to lay the groundwork for his 1996 run.

But, although he hosts fund-raisers for Buchanan, Milliken doesn't just raise money. He's also an adviser; he reads drafts of Buchanan's books, and he assured Buchanan of his continued support when Buchanan left the Republican Party last year. In October, Milliken hosted the Washington book party for *A Republic, Not an Empire*, Buchanan's revisionist take on World War II. Employees of Milliken & Co. have donated more money to Buchanan's campaign than those of any other company, and Buchanan has raised more cash from Milliken's zip code than from any other in the United States. "We love Pat Buchanan, always have," says Nash. "We'll do everything we can to help Buchanan get the Reform Party nomination."

BUCHANAN'S REFORM PARTY candidacy is the latest sign that Milliken's long, dogged crusade to build a nationalist movement in America is bearing fruit. But the more success and scrutiny this movement receives, the more it will face one overriding problem. The conservative counter-establishment of the '70s succeeded because of more than just money and strategic smarts. In an era of bloated and mismanaged government, it suggested serious policy alternatives—alternatives that Reagan tried during the '80s with some success. The Buchanan-Milliken counter-establishment, by contrast, has no plausible alternative to globalization. To understand why, you need only head to upstate South Carolina, home to Milliken's headquarters and a shining example of why America can never be the sovereign economy that the textile baron imagines.

As far back as the '60s, someone driving down Interstate 85 between Spartanburg and Greenville would have seen Swiss and German flags on the side of the road. Today, a visitor to the oddly European-flavored downtown Greenville, which hums with the constant buzz of new construction, can choose from any number of Austrian- or Italian-owned gourmet restaurants, which are packed even during the week. Or he can get his car's windshield fixed at Fuyao Glass, one of the only companies in America owned by the People's Republic of China. At the local Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport (Milliken is its chairman), there is a constant influx of European and Asian businesspeople. In fact, the mayor of Greenville himself, Knox White, is an immigration lawyer. Per capita foreign investment in the region is the highest in the nation.

How did all this happen? The answer is Roger Milliken. Several decades ago, the dominant American textile loom-maker, the Draper Corporation, made a bet that mill owners like Milliken would never buy the superior new equipment being introduced by foreign competitors. "That was a terrible mistake," Milliken told *Wall Street Journal* reporters Bob Davis and David Wessel. Milliken replaced the American equipment in his factories with the far superior and cheaper foreign machinery. While Milliken and the foreign loom-manufacturers prospered, Draper flailed and was eventually gobbled up by an Indonesian conglomerate.

ALTHOUGH MILLIKEN IS the chairman of the Crafted With Pride in the USA Council, the union and business coalition that has spent millions on ads suggesting that imports are hurting the economy, for decades now he has bought only foreign-made machinery to produce his American textiles. The foreign manufacturers of this equipment, including Sulzer of Switzerland and Menzel of Germany, began to establish a full-time presence in South Carolina in order to service their equipment shipped from abroad. In fact, as Davis and Wessel document in their book, *Prosperity*, Milliken & Co.'s imports allowed foreign investors to get a foot in the door. Once they realized that upstate South Carolina was a good place to do business, they began pouring in. BMW attracted a great deal of attention in 1992 when it moved to the area. But BMW was a latecomer; 45 German companies were already in the county when it arrived.

Today, BMW, Michelin, Fuji, and a host of other foreign companies have major factories in South Carolina. No longer is it feast or famine for this region once tied to the vagaries of the textile industry; upstate South Carolina is now a diversified economy that has soaked up lost textile employment with new, high-tech, high-wage jobs. Between 1988 and 1994, American-owned firms in the area lost 26,000 jobs, while the state's foreign-owned firms added 20,600—with higher average salaries. Overall, South Carolina added a total of 163,000 new jobs in those seven years. "There's definitely a strong consensus," says Mayor White, "that we have reinvented ourselves and have a big stake in the world economy." Locals joke that the most ardent protectionist in America has inadvertently created one of the crown jewels of the global economy right in his own backyard. "More than any single person," Milliken brought in the foreign investment, says White. As the Marxists Milliken once battled might say, there is an internal contradiction in Milliken's "fortress America" philosophy. He himself has constructed a powerful case for why, despite Seattle and Buchanan and the rash of new institutions springing up in Washington, a real nationalist revolt is probably not at hand. The man behind the next American counter-establishment has feet of clay. ■

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Listening Again

LAST WEEK AN English director, Mike Figgis, with a film quite unlike his past work (*Miss Julie*). This week another English Mike—Mike Leigh—with a film quite unlike his past work. Leigh, both a writer and a director, is known for compassionate explorations of modern prole life such as *High Hopes* and *Secrets and Lies*. Now he presents **Topsy-Turvy** (October) which is, of all things, a biographical film about Gilbert and Sullivan.

To understand those two men, in fuller dimension than this picture itself provides, is to glimpse why the social-minded Leigh may have been drawn to them. In 1991 the English historian David Cannadine published an essay called "Three Who Made a Revolution": those three were Gilbert, Sullivan, and Richard D'Oyly Carte, the manager who was their advocate and who built a theater (the Savoy) to house their productions. Cannadine examines why those G & S pieces that are, for many Americans, remembered as school shows—*Iolanthe*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, and so on—were irruptions in the complacency of the Victorian theater. Cannadine also notes that the expiration of copyrights in G & S works liberated them from musty "traditional" revivals and enabled fresh pertinent productions. He cites Wilford Leach's *The Pirates of Penzance* in New York in 1981 and Jonathan Miller's *The Mikado* for the British National Opera in 1986. (I would add Tyrone Guthrie's New York production of *H. M. S. Pinafore* in 1961.) We can infer that, whether or not Mike Leigh had read Cannadine, he was attracted to G & S because they were not mere Victorian confectioners, they were disturbers of the cultural peace.

No writer-composer team in the Anglophone world can match Gilbert and Sullivan. Ira and George Gershwin wrote enchanting songs, Rodgers and Hammerstein touched lots of common denominators, but who would think of their entire shows as *works*? (For the one exception, Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, DuBose Heyward was an important contributor.) A usual formulation is that G & S were "a genius." This cliché is much more needful for Sullivan than for Gilbert. Sullivan's other music—a grand opera, a symphony, oratorios, and more—has faded away, but Gilbert, on his own, wrote a gem of a play, a mordant social satire called *Engaged*. (He also wrote plays called *Topsy-Turveydom* and, anticipating Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*.) And the world would be poorer without his *Bab Ballads*, a collection of unsurpassed light verse, which he illustrated with his wickedly elfin drawings. If Gilbert had never met Sullivan (a clause that makes me shudder as I write it), he would still have a small place in literary history. Sullivan without Gilbert would now be remembered as the composer of "The Lost Chord" and "Onward, Christian Soldiers."

Leigh's film begins with the premiere of *Princess Ida* (1884) and ends with the premiere of *The Mikado* (1885). In between we get snatches of rehearsals, backstage difficulties, Gilbert's prowess as stage director (there is in fact a book on that subject), and the private lives of the two collaborators. What we do not get is any sense of the irruptive effect that Cannadine describes and that, I assume, was Leigh's initial interest. Some scenes of G & S activities, and of colleagues, are paraded past; then the first Yum Yum sings "The Sun Whose Rays," and the film stops. (Leigh doesn't even include the famous quarrel between G & S about a piece of carpet for the Savoy Theater, a quarrel that boiled into the law courts and separated the partners for three years. They reunited, but their last two collaborations were not successful.) The film just flicks the pages of an album. It's worse than inorganic: it teases us with the feeling that Leigh had a basic plan for the picture and never realized it.

Still worse, there are many scenes that add nothing. Why, for instance, do we see Gilbert's father imagining an attack by spirits? Or Gilbert being assailed by a ragged crone in a London alley? Such scenes as Sullivan's visit to a Paris brothel or drug use by one of the Savoy company may have been intended as rips in a prettified Victorian fabric, the "truth" about those days; but since there is no consistent program about that "truth," no full counterpoint of offstage reality to contrast with the onstage artifice, those scenes seem only afterthought apologies for dealing with this dainty subject.

Topsy-Turvy has some pleasures. First, obviously, are the numbers from G & S, solos, duets, choruses, which make us wonder again why some of the comic operas of Rossini and Donizetti are OK items for the opera house but not *Iolanthe* and *Patience*. Then, Jim Broadbent's performance as Gilbert adds another warmth to his valuable career; Allan Corduner very nearly convinces as Sullivan; and Ron Cook is quietly winning as Carte. Lindy Hemming's costumes are exactly what they ought to be, and Dick Pope's cinematography has the right gaslight-lamplight feeling. Leigh directs smoothly in, for him, a new vein: not only in constructed scenes with the sorts of structure that he has never tolerated, but actual theater scenes, long shots of the stage intercut with close-ups of performers. Yet, the better that some of the picture's elements are, the more unsatisfying it is, the more we long for Leigh's realization of what was presumably his revisionist purpose.

Coincidentally, here is another film about the creation of a musical work in the past. **Cradle Will Rock** (Touchstone), written and directed by Tim Robbins, centers on the first production of Marc Blitzstein's "play in music," *The Cradle Will Rock*. (Why did Blitzstein's title lose its article en route to the screen? Maybe because those who call Moviefone will thus avoid mix-up with other "The" titles.)

Blitzstein's work, which was about workers' fight for rights in Steeltown, U.S.A., was sponsored in 1937 by Hallie Flanagan, the head of the Federal Theater Project. She put the production in the hands of her colleagues, Orson Welles and John Houseman. In his film Robbins uses the history of that enterprise to depict the hurl and burl of those hectic times—the agonies of the Depression, the constant fears about fascism's rise in Europe, and, most prominently, the struggle from 1935 to 1939 to maintain a federally financed artistic enterprise at a time when Congress was worried about Communist infiltration and many of the most fertile theater people were leftist or left-leaning.

The resultant film is a mess. Robbins has included so much about the Federal Theater and about other contemporary currents that the film soon becomes stroboscopic. Flashes and snips—of rehearsal

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conferences, of the Welles-Houseman productions of *Macbeth* and *Doctor Faustus*, of Congressional investigation, of Blitzstein's conversations with Bertolt Brecht (who was in New York at the time and did indeed spur the composer), of the quarrels between Nelson Rockefeller and Diego Rivera about the latter's politicized mural for Rockefeller Center, and much more—soon have us breathing hard to keep up. We get so many hurried peeks at so much that only one of the people takes on any reasonable life: Hallie Flanagan, the dedicated woman who led the Federal Theater Project, here reasonably played by the gifted Cherry Jones. But Hank Azaria as Blitzstein, Angus Macfadyen as Welles, Cary Elwes as Houseman, Ruben Blades as Rivera, John Cusack as Rockefeller, are all just silly, and it's not their fault. They are asked to create characters with sound bites.

I had a special difficulty with this film. I was around at the time of these events. I saw Welles's *Macbeth* (set in the Caribbean with an all-black cast) and *Dr. Faustus*. I knew some of the people represented in the film, one of them quite well. Robbins at last reconciled me to their loss: they didn't have to see his film.

A few years before Houseman died, *The Cradle Will Rock* was revived Off Broadway, and before every performance Houseman read the passage from his autobiography about the historic evening of the piece's premiere. The government had barred the play from the federally subsidized theater where it was supposed to be performed. A supporter engaged another theater at curtain time; then the entire cast and the entire first-night audience marched twenty-one blocks up Broadway to the other theater. There, with no scenery and with Blitzstein at the piano, the work had its opening night. It's a thrilling story. The trouble with the recent revival was that Houseman's reading was followed by a performance of the work, and it's just not very good—poster politics and dry music. But at the time.... ■

The utilitarian horrors of Peter Singer.

Other People's Mothers

By PETER BERKOWITZ

I.

IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, *The New York Times Sunday Magazine* featured a brief article on the solution to world poverty, which in a few short, snappy steps argued to the astonishing conclusion that middle-class American households have a moral obligation to contribute more than one-third of their income (and all households every cent earned above $30,000) to the hungry and disadvantaged around the globe. The editors at the paper seemed to see no irony in the appearance of such an argument in the same magazine whose style and fashion pages regularly promote some of the most conspicuous consumption of the day.

Introducing the author of the article, the *Times* proclaimed the Australian-born and Oxford-trained philosophy professor Peter Singer to be "perhaps the world's most controversial ethicist." And a week before, Singer, who had been recently appointed amid much (and continuing) furor to a new chair in bioethics at Princeton's University Center for Human Values, was the subject of a long and largely flattering profile in *The New Yorker*, whose front flap declared him "the most influential living philosopher." Since celebrity is anything but the ordinary reward for a life devoted to teaching and philosophical reflection on ethics, the case of Peter Singer endows the obvious questions—why the controversy? whence the influence?—with special interest.

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A DARWINIAN LEFT: POLITICS, EVOLUTION, AND COOPERATION
by Peter Singer
(Yale University Press, 64 pp., $9.95)

PRACTICAL ETHICS, SECOND EDITION
by Peter Singer
(Cambridge University Press, 395 pp., $18.95)

To the obvious questions, there are obvious answers. Singer is controversial for certain remarkable views that he holds: that infanticide and euthanasia (and of course abortion) are not only permissible in certain circumstances, they are sometimes also morally obligatory. And the major part of his influence stems from certain other views, in particular his argument that many non-human animals are, in truth, persons, possessing the same "special claim to be protected" usually thought to be the peculiar privilege of human beings. But controversy and influence do not a philosopher make. Singer's acclaim as well his notoriety are owed to the intellectual respectability he gives to his views in his accessible, engaging, and voluminous writings. His opinions have a reputation for being rigorous. He seems to be a genuinely rational man, a true creature of logic.

Given his reputation as a crafter of arguments, Singer's recent debut in the *Times* magazine was a puzzling performance. One would think that to reach his dramatic conclusion—to live a "morally decent life," households must eschew all luxuries and donate that part of their income in excess of what is necessary for their bare necessities to the world's poor—Singer would need to summon heavy logical and moral artillery. After all, he does not merely suggest that households ought to contribute *more* money than is customary to charitable causes, or that they should sacrifice *some* luxuries on behalf of perfect strangers. No, he equates moral decency with an almost monkish renunciation of material goods, popular entertainment, cultivated pleasures, and devotion to the special care of one's friends and family. "The formula," Singer declares, "is simple: whatever money you're spending on luxuries, not necessities, should be given away." A total mortification of the

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consumerist soul.

To be sure, Singer acknowledges that weakness and selfishness will prevent most of us from coming close to complying with his—excuse me, with morality's—minimum imperatives. Yet to justify the moral life as the abstemious life, he makes no appeal to theological categories, to God or sin or redemption. Nor do natural rights, or natural law, or any notion of universal principles of justice, enter into the argument for his simple formula. Instead Singer hangs his radical revision of our common conception of moral decency on a single, surreal, hypothetical dilemma.

SINGER'S "IMAGINARY EXAMPLE," whose purported purpose is to "probe our intuitions," is in its way strong and ingenious:

> Bob is close to retirement. He has invested most of his savings in a very rare and valuable old car, a Bugatti, which he has not been able to insure. The Bugatti is his pride and joy. In addition to the pleasure he gets from driving and caring for his car, Bob knows that its rising market value means that he will always be able to sell it and live comfortably after retirement. One day when Bob is out for a drive, he parks the Bugatti near the end of a railway siding and goes for a walk up the track. As he does so, he sees that a runaway train, with no one aboard, is running down the railway track. Looking farther down the track, he sees the small figure of a child very likely to be killed by the runaway train. He can't stop the train and the child is too far away to warn of the danger, but he can throw a switch that will divert the train down the siding where his Bugatti is parked. Then nobody will be killed—but the train will destroy his Bugatti. Thinking of his joy in owning the car and the financial security it represents, Bob decides not to throw the switch. The child is killed. For many years to come, Bob enjoys owning his Bugatti and the financial security it represents.

Most people will immediately respond, Singer contends, that Bob's conduct is "gravely wrong." Suppose that Singer is correct about his readers' typical response. It is worth noting that, though he regularly scolds others for failing to address empirical questions empirically, Singer provides no evidence to support this empirical claim. More importantly, what follows from the moral intuition that Bob ought to sacrifice his pride and joy and the source of his financial security to save the innocent child's life? What follows, Singer asserts, is the inflexible and unqualified duty, regardless of variations in personal circumstances, to give to the poor, beyond a certain austere minimum, all one's income and wealth.

Bob's dilemma may at first glance seem contrived and outlandish, and wildly remote from ordinary experience; but in the morally relevant respects it is, Singer argues, no different from the challenge we all confront every day: "When Bob first grasped the dilemma that faced him as he stood by that railway switch, he must have thought how extraordinarily unlucky he was to be placed in a situation in which he must choose between the life of an innocent child and the sacrifice of most of his savings. But he was not unlucky at all. We are all in that situation." Are we? One reason to doubt that any moral formula—much less a simple universal formula that mandates a major transformation in how we live our lives—can be derived from Bob's dilemma is the powerful lack of similarity between Bob's situation and our own.

SINGER'S IMAGINARY EXAMPLE radically simplifies matters. Bob appears to be wifeless, childless, parentless, and friendless. And Bob appears to have only two choices: he can save his prized possession and personal fortune, which will allow the child to die, or, saving the child, Bob can allow his financial security to be wiped out. In deciding how much of our income we ought to give away, however, surely we face a smooth spectrum of possibilities. We can give a few dollars, or a few hundred dollars, or a few thousand dollars. We can give to the poor ten percent of our income, as do many pious Christians and observant Jews (who, on Singer's account, fall considerably short of their obligations and therefore live morally indecent lives). We can give away one fifth of our income, as does Singer (and very admirably, though he stands condemned as morally indecent by his own simple formula). To replicate the situation in which we actually find ourselves, Singer's example would not only have to allow degrees of generosity or selfless giving, it would also have to incorporate a variety of factors and recognize a range of tradeoffs. For in our lives we must balance sacrifices in personal wealth against, among other things, the kind of injuries that we can practicably prevent, the number of innocent sufferers involved, the proximity of those in need to us, and the cost of our benevolence to those whom we love and with whom we share our lives.

Reflection on the many textures and myriad colors of the moral life suggests that Singer's use of the imaginary example also distorts our situation as citizens and human beings by focusing on a single moral intuition to the exclusion of all others. In fact, a good part of the drama of the moral life arises from the clash between competing moral intuitions. While it may be true that many have an intuition that we should sacrifice considerable personal wealth to save innocent human lives, some of these same are likely also to possess the intuition that we have stronger obligations to care for the personal happiness of our family and friends than to tend to the basic needs of passing acquaintances and perfect strangers. And no doubt individuals could be found who, while appreciating the distinctive duties owed strangers and intimates, also intuit that the perfection of their talents, which requires wealth and leisure, stands as an obligation that they owe to both themselves and others.

HAVING CASUALLY INVESTED intuition with moral authority, Singer overlooks that in living the moral life we find ourselves subject to the authority of multiple and competing intuitions. And even if we had but a single relevant intuition concerning our duty to give, or if all our relevant intuitions sang in harmonious unison, what is the philosophical basis for investing intuitions with moral authority? Singer himself observes that "most people could be wrong; we can't decide moral issues by taking opinion polls." But the argument he offers for viewing massive worldwide redistribution of wealth as a moral imperative rests on an even flimsier basis than opinion polls, and that is his own armchair speculation about people's moral intuitions as inferred from their imagined response to a single philosophical thought experiment.

Singer argues that if you think person X should do act Y in situation Z, then, in order to be consistent, you should do act A in situation B. But he has nothing to say about the goodness or rightness of Y, other than the (falsifiable) contingency that many people believe person X should do it in situation Z. No doubt it belongs among the tasks of philosophy to identify our basic intuitions and to clarify their implications. But another of philosophy's task is to assess the soundness of our intuitions, to sift out what is owed to ignorance, bias, sentimentality, and confusion, and to refine what remains into principles that are sturdy, flexible, and just.

On examination, it appears that Singer's imaginary example is designed less to "probe our intuitions" than it is carefully constructed to serve a single solitary intuition, and to vindicate a peculiarly extreme and one-sided interpretation of the moral life. It also appears that Singer's "penchant for provocation," as the *Times*

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breathlessly put it, can be nourished by a rather energetic inclination to obfuscation. Of course, one can only demand so much, even from an eminent philosophy professor, when he writes in the pages of a daily newspaper. And Singer performs a valuable service by impelling readers to confront, and make moral sense of, the great gap between our prosperity and the desperate poverty in which large portions of the world's population live. Yet the careful consideration of his most controversial views and his most influential arguments reveals that the obfuscation evident in the *Times* article is not a mere lapse from customary rigor for the sake of reaching a popular audience. It is, rather, part and parcel of Singer's characteristic approach to the problems of ethics.

II.

SINGER HAS DEVELOPED his ideas in numerous articles and books, some of which are scholarly, some of which are popular, and some of which blur the genres. He dealt with political themes at the beginning of his career in *Democracy and Disobedience*, has published short synoptic volumes on Hegel and Marx, and recently completed a biography of the American animal rights activist Henry Spira; but the preponderance of his writings concentrate on sensitive and high-profile moral issues involving decisions about life and death: animal rights, reproduction, abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, famine relief, and refugees. His best known book is *Animal Liberation*. Since its appearance in 1975, it has sold more than 500,000 copies, and cannot but provoke fair-minded readers to examine their views about the myriad uses—some clearly brutal—to which we put animals for our convenience, health, and pleasure.

Singer's tiny new book is another story. *A Darwinian Left* is not devoid of useful admonitions about the dangers of utopian visions, and the aspirations to remake human nature, and the dreams of the perfectibility of humankind; but it features a central line of argument that manages to be both unexceptionable and incoherent. Singer does not argue, as his title might seem to imply, that what follows from Darwin is a progressive politics; he himself emphatically endorses the view that values cannot be deduced from facts, including the facts of evolution. Rather, he contends that if the left wishes to effectively pursue its primary goal—which Singer understands to be the creation of an egalitarian society through the aggressive redistribution of wealth—it must face up to the truths about our descent from and kinship with non-human animals. To feed the hungry, and care for the sick, and emancipate the oppressed, and lift up the poor, the left must devise programs based on a realistic understanding of the facts of human nature; and the best guide to human nature, according to Singer, is "Darwinian thinking."

SINGER CASUALLY ASSUMES that a politics of the left is synonymous with justice. And he writes as if the theory of evolution, unsupplemented by the study of history, literature, religion, and philosophy, provides the left with more or less all that it needs to know concerning human nature. His book also glosses over contemporary disputes that rage in and outside of biology about the scope of sociobiological theory, which Singer treats as the authoritative interpretation of Darwin. But what is most devastating to Singer's thesis that the left should ground itself in the theory of evolution is that the sociobiological interpretation of Darwin favored by Singer subverts the extreme egalitarian aspirations in the defense of which Singer writes.

According to Singer, the longstanding aversion to Darwin on the left derives from the view that evolutionary theory teaches that man is by nature selfish. Singer does not deny that Darwin teaches this, or that it is true. But he argues that it constitutes at most half the truth. As Darwinian thinking has developed, Singer writes, it has come to the conclusion that human beings are also hard-wired for cooperation. Early forms of Darwinism were unable to explain the fact of cooperation and the reality of human sociality; but sociobiology, of the sort best- known from the work of E.O. Wilson, argues that it makes evolutionary sense to rein in our desires and to make sacrifices, even of our lives, for the sake of those who are related to us—it makes evolutionary sense, that is, when human life is understood in terms of the drive to pass along our genes. Life is indeed a struggle for survival, but of genes, not of individuals or nations; and in this struggle of the "selfish gene," unfolding over millennia, individuals with a propensity to cooperate with kin were naturally selected.

On the basis of this currently popular interpretation of Darwin—this greening of Darwin, you might say—Singer suggests that altruism, including "genuine altruism," which he defines as "an impartial concern for all of our fellow humans, or, better still, for all sentient beings," is grounded in our genes. Accordingly, the left must learn to take account of our dual nature, channeling the propensity for selfishness into productive activities that advance the public interest, and institutionalizing incentives to encourage the

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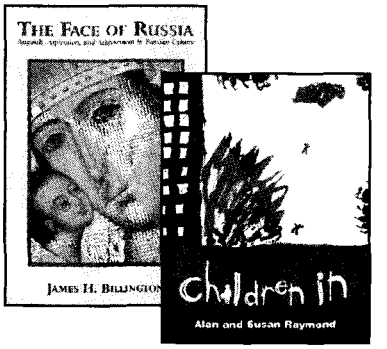

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expressions of our propensity for altruism. Given the extent of the biological determinism that he embraces and the degree of social engineering he envisages, it seems as if, on Singer's account, the left would do well to forget about ethics, at least any ethics that supposes that human beings are rational and free and can act otherwise than they are programmed, and can arrive at responsible judgments that differ from the message that society sends them.

In dividing human nature between narrow selfishness and impartial concern for others, Singer wishes to acknowledge a certain complexity. In reality, he not only uncritically reduces the panoply of human passions and interests to two basic propensities, but actually also obscures sociobiology's own central insight about altruism and the challenge that it poses to the universal benevolence that underlies many leftist hopes. For the altruism that sociobiology teaches is built into our nature is not primarily the "genuine altruism" that inspires Singer's cross-species egalitarianism. It is, rather, "kin altruism," which is directed toward those who possess a portion of our genetic make-up. In practice, this means that the drive to ensure the survival of our genes will lead us to act selflessly on behalf of children, siblings, and other close relatives, but it will move us only very weakly if at all on behalf of perfect strangers. Indeed, "kin altruism" powerfully discourages sacrifice on behalf of total strangers, because such sacrifice reduces the time, energy, and wealth we can devote to family and kin group, who alone share some of our genes. Thus it is not only our natural selfishness but also our natural altruism—which makes us partial to our near and dear, at least according to the form of Darwinian thinking Singer embraces—that undercuts the politics of universal benevolence. So much for a Darwinian left.

III.

It is not this recent ill-conceived foray into politics, but *Practical Ethics*, which was first published in 1979, and then revised and reissued in 1993, and which by now has sold more than 120,000 copies, that is most representative of Singer's thought. The book gathers together in one place and restates the arguments that have earned him fame and influence. It has been assigned as a textbook for ethics courses across the United States and in Europe; it has been translated into German, Italian, Spanish, and Swedish, as well as Japanese; and it is used by Singer in his own class on ethics at Princeton. It aims to be both academic and practical, to instruct students and to advance public debate. It provides an excellent opportunity to assess Singer's philosophical achievement.

Singer begins his book by stating what he believes ethics is not. It is not, as Singer says "traditional moralists" believe, "a set of prohibitions particularly concerned with sex" (a charge, it must immediately be noted, that is patently false, at least if one numbers Aristotle, Augustine, Maimonides, and Aquinas among traditional moralists), since "sex raises no unique moral issues at all." Nor is ethics, as Singer suggests that realists and cynics think, "an ideal system that is noble in theory but no good in practice," since "the whole point of ethical judgments is to guide practice." Nor is ethics, as Singer maintains that rights theorists hold, "a system of short and simple rules," since simple rules often conflict and sometimes an apparently sound rule, when scrupulously followed, can lead to disaster. Nor is ethics, as many religious believers and some free-thinking nonbelievers contend, "something intelligible only in the context of religion," because we properly define the good independently of God's judgment and "our everyday observation of our fellow human beings clearly shows that ethical behaviour does not require belief in heaven and hell." Nor is ethics "relative or subjective" in the sense that it reflects our culture's point of view or our own personal judgments, because then we could have no rational basis for moral praise or blame, thereby "making nonsense of the valiant efforts of would-be moral reformers."

Many objections could be raised to Singer's catalogue of misconceptions about ethics. Proponents of the conceptions he rejects are likely to protest the crudity with which their views are introduced and then summarily dispatched. Those who have studied Mill's account, in *On Liberty*, of the many-sidedness of morals and politics, or have learned (as Mill did) from Plato's dialogues to appreciate the partiality and the vulnerability of our opinions about justice, or who have simply taken the time to listen closely to the give and take of ordinary people arguing about the issues of the day, will be taken aback by Singer's categorical and complete rejection of ideas with which he disagrees, and by his inability to find in other perspectives and approaches any power or plausibility or part of the truth.

Since his intention in beginning his book with an examination of the nature and the scope of ethics is to provide a preliminary overview of his subject matter, perhaps the most serious objection to Singer's bundle of errors concerns what he leaves out. Among the opinions that he apparently deems unworthy of even criticism and refutation is the oldest understanding of ethics, the one developed by Aristotle (the founder of ethics as an independent philosophical subject) and since elaborated in countless works of literature and history, namely, that ethics in essence is about character. Aristotle taught that ethics—which derives from *ethos*, the ancient Greek word for character—is the branch of philosophy that studies the virtues, the exercise of which enable human beings to act well and flourish, to live the kind of life that makes a human being truly happy, just, and good.

Though he recognizes no intellectual need or philosophical obligation to consider on the merits the view that ethics is essentially about character, Singer in practice rejects it in favor of the opinion, quite common in universities today, that the essence of ethics is reason. "The notion of living according to ethical standards," he innocuously observes, "is tied up with the notion of defending the way one is living, of giving a reason for it, of justifying it." But in practice, for Singer, the giving of reasons is not merely tied up with ethics, it is the very heart and soul of ethics.

And the right kind of reason-giving occurs from the perspective of "a universal point of view." On this, Singer implies, the Western philosophical tradition is in all but complete and unbroken agreement. "From ancient times," he asserts, "philosophers and moralists have expressed the idea that ethical conduct is acceptable from a point of view that is somehow universal." Singer's "somehow" might indicate a certain tentativeness, a recognition that his thesis is in fact somehow open to question; but he immediately proceeds to suggest that it is not really debatable at all. Gesturing on its behalf to an overwhelming array of teachers and teachings—Moses and Jesus, Stoic natural law, Kant's categorical imperative, Adam Smith's impartial spectator, Bentham's utilitarianism, Rawls's procedural liberalism, Sartre's existentialism, and Habermas's discourse ethics—Singer implies that in philosophy and religion support for the identity of the universal point of view with the ethical point of view is, well, universal. And this universal point of view, Singer suggests, goes beyond the merely formal: it not only takes into account all people, it also has built into it the substantive idea that all persons must be taken account of equally.

As in the case of his effort to say what ethics is not, however, Singer's preliminary attempt to say what ethics is quickly falters before certain immediate and imposing difficulties. In equating the ethical

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point of view with the universal point of view and the universal point of view with the idea of equality, Singer does not note that from ancient times many distinguished philosophers have also rejected the notion that a single rule or standard governs all individuals and applies to all conduct. In his long list of eminent thinkers he somehow does not manage to mention among classic thinkers the names of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Machiavelli, or Burke, and among contemporary thinkers Hannah Arendt and Alasdair MacIntyre, who all reject the equation of ethics with an abstract principle of human equality. Nor does Singer distinguish the variety of ways in which a rule or a standard might apply universally.

What Singer means by universality is a substantive claim about equal worth regardless of excellence or merit. But it is obvious, or it should be obvious, that universality by no means implies equality. Nietzsche may be wrong on the merits, but there is no internal contradiction in his claim, fervently argued in *Beyond Good and Evil*, that free spirits and the philosophers of the future possess special rights and privileges. It is a claim that is at once resolutely aristocratic and resolutely universal: wherever and whenever they arise, declares Nietzsche, rare human types are entitled to liberties that ought to be absolutely off-limits to the ordinary run of men and women.

UNFAZED BY THESE and related difficulties, Singer proceeds to suggest that not only is there a natural affinity between the ethical point of view and the school of ethics known as utilitarianism, but that utilitarianism and practical ethics are for all intents and purposes one and the same. In 1789, in *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, the English rationalist and progressive reformer Jeremy Bentham provided a classic statement of utilitarianism's core idea: "By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words, to promote or to oppose that happiness." A form of what moral philosophers call consequentialism, utilitarianism does seem to give expression to the common sense idea (it is to common sense that Singer is explicitly appealing) that in determining the morality of an action, we must look to its results, whether and to what extent the action in question brings benefit or harm.

But this common sense idea does not exhaust what common sense has to say about ethics. For there is also a natural affinity between the common sense view of ethics and the great rival to consequentialism in modern philosophy. That school, whose towering figure is Kant, and which sometimes goes by the daunting name of deontology, argues that the relevant factor in determining the morality of an action is not its foreseen consequences but the rational intentions that motivate and guide it. If it is a staple of common sense that consequences matter in morals, it is no less a staple of common sense that in morality intentions matter, that sometimes we must seek to do the right thing come what may, that evil must not be done even for the sake of good consequences.

Common sense would have us tend to both consequences and intentions. Just as it is a mistake to suppose that consequences are irrelevant to moral conduct, so, too, it is a mistake to imagine that right and wrong can be determined by a utilitarian calculation of consequences alone. Some things—the framing of innocents, rape, slavery, murder—are wrong in themselves, and cannot be justified on the grounds that, in this circumstance or that circumstance, the overall social good will be served. This is the great idea captured in Kant's third formulation of the Categorical Imperative: "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end."

It is the appeal to common sense that suggests that it is a mistake to identify the ethical point of view either with the calculation of consequences, in the manner of the utilitarians, or with purity of intentions, in the manner the Kantians think correct. Surely the moral life is best and most responsibly construed as consisting in the effort to heed and to harmonize the competing claims of both these ideals. But Singer, under the guise of elaborating the allegedly irreducible features of the ethical point of view, reads this fundamental tension in the moral life right out of existence.

IV.

SINGER WISHES TO read into utilitarianism a substantive and universal doctrine concerning human equality: that the happiness with which one ought to be concerned is everybody's happiness, rather than some people's happiness—one's nation's, or community's, or family's happiness—or one's own happiness. Among the more disconcerting implications of this doctrine is that the happiness of your spouse, or child, or mother is to you, morally speaking, of no greater significance than the happiness of a distant stranger.

Although they are compatible with it, Singer's interpretations of universality and equality are certainly not entailed by, and they are certainly very far from the only orientations consistent with, the principle of utility. In its classical formulation, it is worth noting, the principle of utility refers to "the happiness of the party whose interest is in question." It does not, by itself, specify the parties or the range of parties whose interests are relevant to the calculation of consequences. To be sure, most utilitarians follow Mill in supposing that in calculating "the greatest good for the greatest number" it is only reasonable and fair for "everybody to count for one, nobody for more than one." But this is an entirely separate matter which requires an independent argument. That neither Bentham nor any of his successors have supplied the argument lends force to the claim advanced by Charles Taylor, Hilary Putnam, and others that the principle that the happiness of each should be given equal weight is a secularized version of the Christian doctrine of the sanctity of human life. Ironically, to the extent that utilitarians such as Singer, under the guise of the logic of utility, succeed in smuggling in their preferences for universal equality, it is because their readers continue to presuppose at a deep and inarticulate level the very doctrine of the dignity of man that Singer's utilitarianism aims to overthrow.

AS HENRY SIDGWICK concluded in his great work *The Methods of Ethics*, which appeared in 1874, one cannot on utilitarian grounds demonstrate that equal concern for all is superior to rational egoism. Why, then, shouldn't looking out for Number One be seen as a rival teaching about ethics rather than, as Singer attempts to argue, a rival to ethics? After all, putting oneself first—whether understood from a mundane perspective as the business of self-preservation, or in more exalted terms as the pursuit of self-perfection—can be formulated as a principle and understood either in terms of maximizing happiness or protecting individual rights; and it can can govern universally; and it requires the cultivation and exercise of specific virtues.

What accounts for the long trail of objections, difficulties, and doubts created by Singer's preliminary efforts to dissolve difficulties and silence doubts is his determination to present one particular opinion about the nature of ethics as if it were necessitated by or identical to the ethical point of view. What accounts for the failure of so many of his colleagues to be disturbed by this act of intellectual impe-

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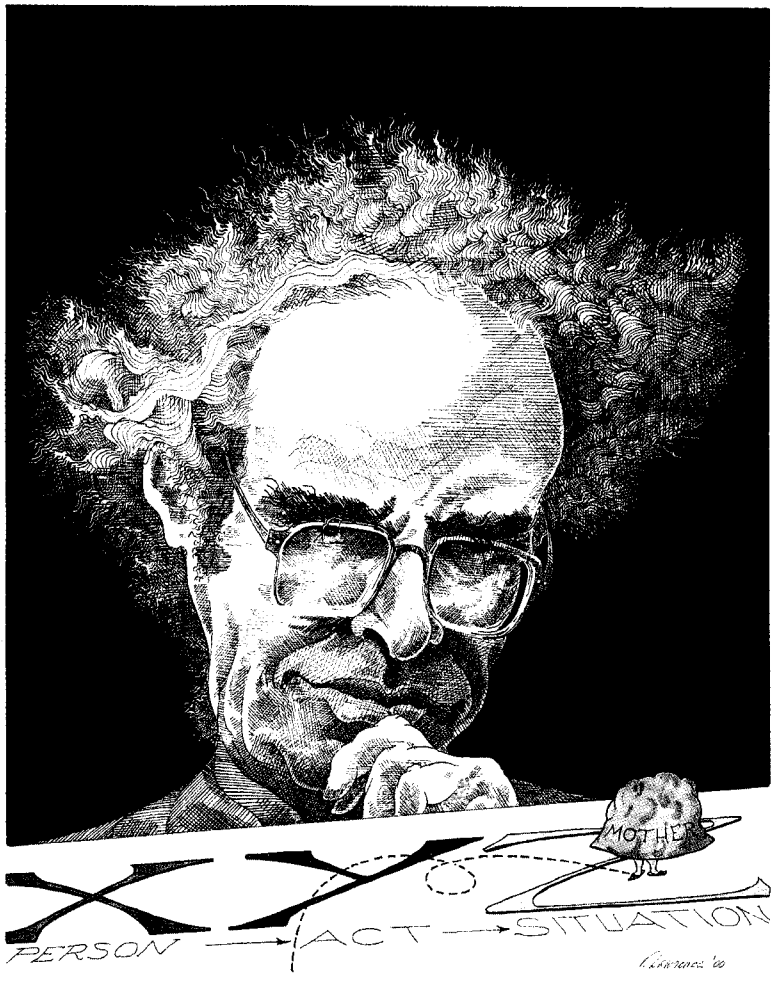
rialism is perhaps the extent to which they share his prejudice that the principal task of ethics is to derive from fixed and unquestionable principles the implications of human equality for moral and political life.

Singer contends that the equation of ethics with equality is not willful or partisan but a necessary inference from the ethical point of view. "Equality," he declares, "is a basic ethical principle, not an assertion of fact," which is his way of saying that equality inheres in the very logical structure of the idea of ethics. All arguments that instead attempt to find the basis for human equality in some empirical quality of human nature—intelligence, rationality, moral personality—are doomed, according to Singer, because these qualities can always be seen to be unequally distributed. Never mind that thinkers such as Hobbes, Locke, and Kant argued that equality can be derived from human nature or our nature as rational beings on the grounds that it is the capacities, which are essential, that are morally relevant, while the differences in capacity among members of the species are too slight to be of moral significance.

In any case, Singer is certainly correct to argue that differences in talents and abilities do not in themselves justify an inegalitarian political order, because "there is no logically compelling reason for assuming that a difference in ability between two people justifies any difference in the amount of consideration we give to their interests." Yet Singer is quite wrong to proceed as if this observation provided an argument in favor of egalitarian political arrangements. For what Singer fails to point out is that there is also no logically compelling reason for assuming that a difference in ability between two people can under no circumstances justify differences in the amount of consideration we give to their interests. On the question of human equality, logic is strictly neutral.

Nevertheless, a partisan interpretation of equality lies at the core of Singer's understanding of ethics:

> The essence of the principle of equal consideration of interests is that we give equal weight in our moral deliberations to the like interests of all those affected by our actions. This means that if only X and Y would be affected by a possible act, and if X stands to lose more than Y stands to gain, it is better not to do the act. We cannot, if we accept the principle of equal consideration of interests, say that doing the act is better, despite the facts described, because we are more concerned about Y than we are about X. What the principle really amounts to is this: an interest is an interest, whoever's interest it may be.



Peter Singer by Vint Lawrence for The New Republic

It is of course difficult to quarrel with the proposition "an interest is an interest." But this having been established, Singer leaves open and scarcely addressed several sizeable questions.

Call the first question the Aristotelian question. What are the relevant respects in which interests ought to be judged like, and what are the relevant respects in which they should be judged unlike? If X is my child and Y is a perfect stranger, and if my child and the stranger are similarly hungry, poorly clothed, and in need of a roof over their heads, then X and Y may have a like interest in obtaining food, clothes, and shelter. But can they be said to have a like interest in having *me* provide for them food, clothes, and shelter? Can *I* be said to have a like interest in caring for my child and for a perfect stranger? It depends in large measure on the answers we give to substantive questions about the nature of interests and the texture of relations, questions which the laws of logic cannot answer, the principle of utility cannot resolve, and the principle of equal consideration of interests cannot adjudicate.

Call the second question the Millian question. At what point, if any, does the influence of an action on someone else's interest become so indirect, so remote, and so slight as to cease to affect that interest in a morally relevant sense? We ordinarily tell others to mind their own business when we feel them to be meddling in our affairs, and when we receive unwanted advice we reproach our would-be benefactors by reminding them that our actions do not concern them. But like the teaspoon of water which, when dropped into the ocean eventually spreads through all parts of the ocean equally, every individual action can be said eventually, if only indirectly, remotely, and slightly, to affect every last person's interests. Hence it is not sufficient, in determining the morality of an action, to consider only whether an action affects an interest; one must consider also the directness, the quality, and the extent of the action's impact on the other's interest.

Call the third question the Kantian question. Why should interests be accorded any moral worth at all? Inasmuch as many (if not all) interests are not under our control, but are formed by forces external to our will, perhaps interests are only equal in the trivial sense that they equally lack moral worth. If my interests are not the expression of deliberation and choice, but rather reflect the cold promptings of biological impulse, or the mechanical operations of the physical laws of cause and effect, or the indoctrination by the established authorities into the values shared by my community, per-

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haps they are morally worthless. Without a plausible account of human freedom, all of our interests might reasonably be seen to be morally irrelevant, equally so.

Singer should not be faulted for failing to provide definitive answers to these enduring questions. No one else has answered them adequately either. They are essentially controversial questions; and the controversy over them was set in motion whenever human beings first began wondering what we owe each other and ourselves, and worrying about how we can be sure that our considered judgments really are correct. Precious knowledge has been gained and brilliant light has been shed, but in these matters no definitive conclusions are in sight; and this intellectual inconclusiveness is itself a measure of our moral vitality.

If you allowed Singer's preliminaries to guide your understanding of ethics, however, you would never guess that any serious issues about human nature, the status of justice, or the claims of divine authority remain unresolved. Singer's grave fault is to proceed as if the fundamental controversies about the nature of ethics have not only been solved, but solved to the advantage of his theory; as if the basic philosophical questions concerning the roots and reach of the moral life not only have all been answered, but answered in his favor.

V.

PERHAPS THE MOST egregious example of Singer's bad habit of treating as a settled matter issues over which reasonable people disagree—and certainly the most significant such misrepresentation for his own theory—is his grandiose repudiation of the doctrine of "the sanctity of human life." Singer argues that the doctrine of the sanctity of human life is a form of "speciesism," an irrational prejudice rooted in discredited medieval religious ideas that gives priority to human beings while sanctioning discrimination against and oppression of non-human animals.

We know, Singer explains, as if he were reciting the obvious for the umpteenth time, that men and women are not created in God's image, because . . . well, as a matter of fact Singer never does say how it is we do know for sure, how rationally and in good faith we can conclude once and for all that the truths of faith are altogether empty and untrue. Proceeding as if atheism—which may be true, but certainly requires argument—were a self-evident truth, an unrebuttable presumption, Singer contends that in the absence of divine sanction there is no reason to regard human life, just because it is human, as worth more than animal life.

On the basis of his atheistic premise, coupled with Singer's contention that "the claim to equality does not rest on the possession of intelligence, moral personality, rationality, or similar matters of fact," one might wonder what obstacle remains to the conclusion that might makes right, or what resources could be called upon to justify treating any form of animal life, human or non-human, as deserving of respect. Singer has an answer, naturally; but the answer hurls his theory into incoherence.

What counts in determining whether respect is owed, says Singer, is whether the being in question is a person. Astonishingly, though they are the fathers of the rights-based moral philosophy that Bentham derided as "nonsense on stilts," Singer follows Locke and Kant in defining a person as "a rational and self-conscious being." But he goes beyond them in two distinctive ways. First, he contends that a considerable variety of non-human animals are capable of reasoning, remembering, and recognizing others, and so they are persons in the relevant sense of the term. Second, he maintains that insofar as particular human beings are incapable of reasoning, remembering, and recognizing others, they cannot be considered persons. Some of the extraordinary implications of Singer's scheme are immediately obvious: dogs and dolphins are persons, while fetuses, newborns, and victims of Alzheimer's disease are not.

Singer wishes to have the reader believe that his moral theory is of a piece, the essential elements elicited from common sense, self-evident truths, and the rationally irresistible judgments of history, and then seamlessly bound together by the unerring and uncompromising laws of logic. Yet the principle of utility, the principle of equal consideration of interests, and the definition of a person, are not obvious, or necessary, or conceptually connected. And considered apart from the causes for which Singer enlists them, moreover, Singer's leading principles produce some rather startling conclusions, though not always the startling conclusions in behalf of which Singer enlists them.

Singer consistently reaches egalitarian and liberationist conclusions, but his basic ideas lay the groundwork for a regime of savage inequality. For Singer himself maintains that equality cannot be grounded in human intelligence, moral personality, or rationality, because such qualities or capacities are unequally distributed among human beings. If rationality and self-consciousness nevertheless define the morally significant person—as Singer insists that they do, in his case for animal rights, euthanasia, infanticide, and abortion—then why shouldn't greater rationality make you more of a person, or a more valuable person, an individual entitled to a greater proportion of society's scarce resources?

Since it only tells you to treat like interests equally, and it does not tell you which interests are in the relevant respects alike,

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no violation of the principle of equal consideration of interests would appear to be involved in determining that the interests of the artistically and intellectually gifted differ qualitatively from, and are superior to, the interests of the ordinary and below-ordinary person, and therefore should count for more. And since it only tells you to approve or to disapprove of an act according to its tendency to augment or to diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question, but it does not identify the nature of happiness or specify the parties whose interests are appropriately taken into account, the principle of utility would seem to leave the artistically and the intellectually gifted free to give binding reasons for the maximization of their own happiness, and, insofar as they attain positions of power, to govern so as to advance their own superior interests. Singer thinks himself a great egalitarian, and he wishes to lead a philosophically reconstituted left; but his confused thinking leads in the opposite direction. Radically aristocratic arrangements appear to be not only consistent with his principles, they seem to be even encouraged by his principles.

VI.

SINGER'S PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS, when they are understood to be animated by the irredentist impulse to push forward the boundaries of equality and individual autonomy into new realms, relations, and species, are rather predictable. They can be neatly summarized, as follows.

Since all animals are sentient beings, their pleasure and pain should be incorporated into our calculations about which actions to perform and which to avoid. Since many non-human animals are persons in the technical sense of the term, they should enjoy protections and privileges normally reserved for human beings alone. We should probably not eat any animals, and we certainly should cease to breed them in cramped, squalid conditions in which their lives are nothing but misery and wretchedness; and owing to the suffering that they must endure, we should also re-think the use of animals in medical and psychological research. Since the fetus or the unborn child is not a person in the technical sense of the term, abortion is morally permissible; indeed, it poses no unique moral issues at all, and if killing the fetus is likely to increase the overall happiness in the world, then abortion is an unambiguous moral good. In consultation with their physician, parents rightly choose infanticide when their newborn is "severely disabled"—a class of unfortunates that Singer understands expansively to include those afflicted with Down's syndrome and hemophilia—and killing their child will permit the parents to try again to bring a healthy baby into the world. Adults suffering from diseases that cause severe and unending pain should be allowed to choose euthanasia. There is a universal moral obligation to relieve poverty and to aid refugees, certainly to an extent substantially greater than now recognized by any country and by all but the most extraordinary individuals. And we have a moral obligation to protect the environment to advance the interests of all the persons in the world, human and non-human alike.

Those are Singer's teachings. It must be acknowledged, notwithstanding the flawed and incomplete arguments by which he arrives at many or even all of these conclusions, that he often impels one to think where thought had seemed no longer necessary. It is useful to be reminded that important principles are at stake in apparently unimportant occasions. The fact is that the new cashmere sweater for your sweetheart that you have been saving up for all summer, or the night on the town at the end of the long week that you tell yourself makes the idiocies at the office seem endurable, to say nothing of the splurge on the Caribbean vacation that promises to restore both your humanity and your tan, all involve outlays of money that could easily have been used to feed the hungry, house the homeless, and educate the ignorant.

SO WHERE DOES one draw a principled line? How does one respond to one's conscience conscientiously? The attempt to answer Singer often leaves one uneasy, in part because there are no easy answers to the hard questions that he poses. And his own easy answers leave one uneasier still.

One of the reasons for the unease is that in far too many cases the reasoning by which Singer moves from his premises to his conclusions turns out to be as badly flawed as the reasoning that he uses to establish his premises' validity. He consistently employs several rather disreputable rhetorical maneuvers, all of which come down to the self-congratulatory imposition of extremely stringent demands on arguments of others accompanied by the quiet relaxation of the demands for evidence and precision on arguments of his own.

Thus Singer insists on the moral irrelevance of the fact that a view is "widely accepted" when the view is opposed to his own; but when they support his position, Singer shows little compunction about appealing to "widely accepted views." Similarly, Singer frequently attempts to discredit the views of his opponents by taking their arguments to a logical extreme, while ignoring the extreme implications that inhere in the logic of his own doctrine. And while Singer takes his opponents to task for failing to supply relevant empirical evidence, he glosses over the empirically questionable claims on which his own arguments rely.

THESE OBFUSCATORY MANEUVERS perform heavy labor in Singer's notorious defense of infanticide. First, there is Singer's flip-flop on the moral relevance of "widely accepted views." According to Singer, since there is no morally relevant difference between a fetus and a newborn infant—like a three-month old fetus, a newborn is sentient, but like a three-month old fetus, the newborn is neither rational nor self-conscious—infanticide, like abortion, is not morally wrong. To support this, Singer adduces widely accepted views from other times and places. He notes approvingly that infanticide was once common, and he suggests that its demise, in which he finds nothing to be thankful for, should be understood as a result of a certain lamentable Christian idiosyncracy. (This is somewhat unfair to Christianity, which must proudly share the blame with Judaism, which took an earlier stand in the ancient world against child sacrifice and infanticide). In this connection, Singer notes that Plato and Aristotle endorsed infanticide, though he neglects to explore the significance of the fact that the assumptions underlying their endorsement of infanticide were at work in their calm and considered justification of slavery. But the plain fact that many adults in modern western liberal democracies are horrified by the thought of infanticide, on the grounds of "the widely accepted obligation to protect the sanctity of human life," counts for little in Singer's analysis.

Then there is Singer's consistently inconsistent concern with pursuing the logic of an idea all the way to the end. To show how silly the opposition to abortion is, Singer suggests that if pro-lifers took their views seriously they would find that they have a moral obligation to protect calves, pigs, and chickens, "for on any fair comparison of morally relevant characteristics, like rationality, self-consciousness, awareness, autonomy, pleasure and pain, and so on, the calf, the pig and the much derided chicken come out well ahead of the fetus at any stage of pregnancy—while if we make the comparison with a fetus of less than three months, a fish would show more signs of consciousness."

In the process of inviting a fair comparison, Singer has unfairly omitted a crucial and morally relevant characteristic: the

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capacity to develop. Unlike a fish, which is incapable of ever becoming different from what it already is—there is only one way to be a fish, and all members of the species exemplify it—there is no telling the unique person into which the unborn child might develop. But put aside Singer's defective effort to reduce the pro-life position to absurdity. Of greater interest is the full range of intriguing implications of Singer's pro-infanticide position.

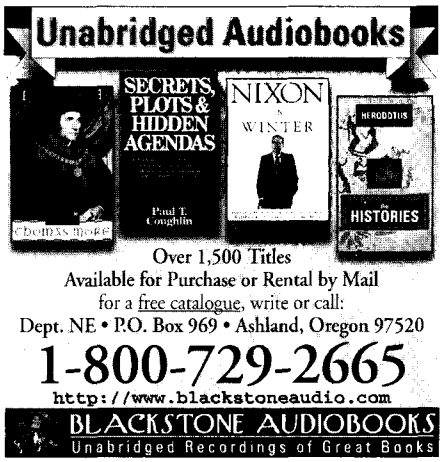
Consider his restriction of infanticide to newborns who are "severely disabled." This restriction, already expansive enough to include hemophiliacs, derives no support from the logic of his position. Singer is right that on the basis of his premises there is no relevant difference between abortion and the killing of "severely disabled infants." But why does he confine the comparison to newborn infants who are severely disabled? He certainly does not confine abortion to severely disabled fetuses. If newborns, like unborn children, are not persons, and it is permissible to abort unborn children regardless of whether they are afflicted or healthy, then newborns, afflicted or healthy, should be subject to killing too, provided of course that "on balance, and taking account the interests of everyone affected," their killing will increase the total amount of happiness or satisfied preferences in the world. Singer certainly offers no good utilitarian reason to confine the killing to severely disabled newborns.

And yet it is tolerably clear why Singer blinks. Call it an old-fashioned sense of the dignity of human life. Nagged by such a scruple, he dodges the logical implications of his new-fangled utilitarian calculus, and seeks to build a fence around the sweeping license to take newborn human life so obviously authorized by his ethical outlook. Yet Singer cannot articulate the actual justifications for the restrictions that he would impose, for to do so would make manifest a certain philosophical faintness of heart. He would be forced to acknowledge the dependence of his own ethical conclusions on the doctrine of the dignity of man that his ethical theory is designed rigorously to replace.

Singer, it should also be said, does wrestle with the question of killing for the sake of promoting a greater good: a classic stumbling block for utilitarian ethics. One solution that he suggests is that whatever benefits could be expected to flow from permitting human beings to be killed on the basis of calculations about the greatest good would be offset by the general anxiety in the population that would be produced by making, in the interest of the good of the whole, each individual subject to having his or her life cut short at any moment—a sort of utilitarian terror. Of course, this argument cannot apply to newborns, since newborns do not feel anxiety about the laws under which they live, nor are any who do feel such anxiety in danger of becoming newborns for a second time.

According to Singer's utilitarian reasoning, severely disabled infants often face a life of low quality and unending suffering that will also only bring misery to their parents and those around them. Perhaps. But surely the same argument could be made, in some cases at least, about only somewhat disabled infants and their parents, especially if the parents are short-tempered and self-centered. And the day may not be far off when science enables us to make immediate predictions about our children's life prospects. What, then, of the especially ambitious parents of newborns of merely ordinary physical abilities and average intelligence who have their hearts set on their son becoming a dashing quarterback or their daughter becoming a high-powered Fortune Five Hundred CEO? Such parents (surely no less imaginable than Bob and his Bugatti) may suffer terribly from raising a son whose averageness will likely prevent him from starring on the football field or a daughter whose intellect is probably not up to competing at the highest levels of commerce. Indeed, the experience of raising merely ordinary children may disappoint and distress especially ambitious parents to such an extent that "on balance, and taking account the interests of everyone affected," their suffering will outweigh whatever happiness their newborn can reasonably be expected to find in life and add to the world. For such parents, from Singer's perspective at least, infanticide would seem to be a moral alternative.

Finally, Singer tacks between the scholar's insistence on reliable empirical evidence and his own unscholarly indifference to empirical evidence. He complains, on the one hand, that opponents of infanticide and euthanasia ignore the harsh facts about the lives of the severely disabled; but he casually posits, on the other hand, that on balance an ordinary human life contains more happiness than sadness. "The infant exists: His life can be expected to contain a positive balance of happiness over misery." Really? Plausible or implausible, this is an empirical claim for which Singer offers no evidence. It is certainly far from a self-evident truth or unrebuttable presumption. Many are the thoughtful men and women who have come to a pessimistic conclusion about life, or whose bitter experience has per-



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suaded them that the Greek god Silenus was right and the best for man is to have never been born, and the next best to die quickly. And if one reduces the moral life to the summing of pains and pleasures, how can one rule out that all is not "vanity of vanities," because "all things are full of weariness: man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing"?

PERHAPS, ON BALANCE, many or most or all human lives contain more suffering than happiness. This is an empirical question, and within a utilitarian framework how it is answered is of considerable significance. Given his repudiation of natural rights and the doctrine of the sanctity of human life, for example, Singer's practical ethics would seem to open the door to calculations concerning the status of the sensitive and the thoughtful—those peculiarly alive to, and prone to suffer from, the absurdities, tragedies, and horrors in which our existence abounds.

Here, as elsewhere, though he places the giving of reasons at the center of ethics, Singer fails to notice many dramatic consequences that flow from the potent and peculiar combination of the principle of utility, the principle of equal consideration of interests, and the repudiation of the doctrine of the sanctity of human life. The list of oversights is lengthened by the long appendix to *Practical Ethics*, called "On Being Silenced in Germany," in which he deplores the attempt in Germany in the early 1990s to bar him from giving public talks about his views on euthanasia and animal rights.

Those Germans who organized against him no doubt went too far in likening his views to those of the Nazis; but their exaggeration, especially given the nightmare that had unfolded in their country, is slight compared to the grotesque exaggeration that Singer commits in reporting their conduct. For in the quiet of his scholar's study, Singer, in an act of obscene indulgence, reverses the charge, and likens those who sought to silence him to the Nazis, and by extension himself to the Nazis' Jewish victims, as if the essence of Nazism were restrictions on freedom of speech. One would have thought that, from Singer's point of view, the salient issue raised by his adamant insistence on his right to express his views in Germany concerns the utilitarian reasoning that justifies the sanctity and inviolability he apparently attaches to his own rights. In all his indignant account of being silenced, however, he remains silent about this crucial question.

In the end, Singer cannot even say whether it is reasonable to be moral. Or rather, he concludes that it is not reasonable. In the final pages of his final chapter, he casually confesses that it is not given to us to be able to assert rationally that a moral life is better or worse than (these are his incredible examples) a life of crime or a life of stamp collecting. Morality, in Singer's view, makes maximal demands, but it is not even minimally obliging. While the moral life requires a radical revision in how we think and act, living morally is no more reasonable than living immorally or amorally. The least one might observe is that this muddle of moralism and laxity, extreme rigor and casual permissiveness, arduous altruism and nonchalant selfishness, has consequences. For one thing, it could scarcely be better calculated to ensure the unprincipled application of moral principles and their hectoring, high-handed, and hamfisted dissemination.

AT THE LEADING universities, the teaching of ethics and the research in ethics has become a booming business. The university ethics programs are supported by hefty gifts from alumni and corporate donors (who seek the services of "ethicists"); they sponsor numerous undergraduate classes; they offer substantial fellowships to graduate students and faculty; and they provide generous honoraria to bring to campuses a steady stream of eminent scholars to deliver open lectures and participate in public symposia. The ethics programs also share a view about the essence of ethics. What links, say, Princeton's University Center for Human Values, Harvard's Program on Ethics and the Professions and the Moral Reasoning division of its Core Curriculum, Yale's Program for Ethics, Politics, and Economics, and Brown University's new Stephen Robert Initiative for the Study of Values is the underlying conviction that the major part of morality consists in reasoning rigorously about moral dilemmas.

But does it? Perhaps it is not surprising that professors, whose job it is to draw fine distinctions, and construct intricate arguments, and infer general laws from particular instances and subsume concrete cases under general rules, should come to the conclusion that what especially makes men and women moral is the refinement of their rational capacities. Yet it remains an inconvenient fact, too little examined by courses in and conferences on ethics, that refined rational capacities can be used for ill as well as for good. As Socrates points out in Book I of the *Republic*, the outstanding doctor, by virtue of his technical knowledge of medicine and the human body, also makes the best poisoner. Knowing all the arguments may help you discern the right and persuade others to do justice. But ratiocinative cleverness or technical proficiency in reasoning about morals may assist you in dazzling and disarming the defenders of common sense and ordinary decency, and in justifying in the name of lofty principles gross violations of personal trust and the public interest. In ethics, as in most walks of life, character makes the difference.

IT IS NOT only on the theoretical level that Singer provides a cautionary example about the professional expertise in practical ethics. The concluding paragraphs of the genial profile of Singer in *The New Yorker* revealed that he has hired, at considerable expense, health care workers to tend to his mother, who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. He is a good son, and his ideas about morality have made him also a prosperous son; but what makes this otherwise common act of filial piety noteworthy is that it flagrantly violates the son's own moral theory.

After all, Singer's mother has lost her ability to reason, and to remember, and to recognize others. She has ceased to be a person in her son's technical sense of the term. In these circumstances, Singer's principles surely require him to take the substantial sums of money that he uses to maintain her in comfort and in dignity and spend them instead to feed the poor and save the lives of innocent children. And early in *Practical Ethics*, Singer declares that the true test of an ethics is its ability to guide life: "Ethics is not an ideal system that is noble in theory but no good in practice. The reverse of this is closer to the truth: an ethical judgment that is no good in practice must suffer from a theoretical defect as well, for the whole point of ethical judgment is to guide practice." Although he strenuously denies that from the ethical point of view we ought to treat friends and family differently, Singer's actions seems to proclaim that what is right and what is rigorous applies only to other people's mothers.

Is this a failure of logic or a failure of nerve? Has love conquered utility? "I think this has made me see how the issues of someone with these kinds of problems are really very difficult," he remarked to *The New Yorker* about the trials of his mother's illness. "Perhaps it is more difficult than I thought before, because it is different when it's your mother." The son's love for his mother is affecting. And the professor's acknowledgment, in the light of the glaring contradiction between his principles and his practice, of the need to rethink views to the development and promulgation of which he has devoted his professional life displays a certain intellectual integrity. But the ethicist's inno-

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cence, at this late date in his career, of the most elemental features of his subject matter boggles the mind.

Indeed, it is hard to imagine a more stunning rebuke to the well-heeled and well-ensconced academic discipline of practical ethics than that its most controversial and influential star, at the peak of his discipline, after an Oxford education, after twenty five years as a university professor, and after the publication of thousands of pages laying down clear cut rules on life-and-death issues, should reveal, only as the result of a reporter's prodding, and only in the battle with his own elderly mother's suffering, that he has just begun to appreciate that the moral life is complex. ■

Code Comfort

By CASS R. SUNSTEIN

The Control Revolution by Andrew L. Shapiro

(Perseus, 286 pp., $25)

Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace by Lawrence Lessig

(Basic Books, 230 pp., $30)

I.

I HAVE A NUMBER of "bookmarks" on my Netscape program. Many of them come from Netscape itself, and I have not changed them. (I am not sure that I could.) These include Nextcard Internet Visa, Toshiba, FTD Flowers, CBS sportsline and ABC news (not CBS news and not ABC sports, and nothing from NBC), and Netscape Channel itself. My personal bookmarks—the ones that I have added myself—include Amazon.com (a site that can be used also as a research tool), *The Washington Post* (with regular updates of news, weather, and sports), Reel.com (a site for renting or buying movies), and United Airlines (finding routes and times for a large number of carriers, along with the cheapest fares; United flights are listed first). A somewhat more exotic bookmark connects to the Social Science Research Network (SSRN), which contains over 16,000 abstracts on social science subjects and over 4,000 "downloadable" academic papers, that is, papers that you can print out and have, in full, just by clicking. Some of these papers were posted (published?) on SSRN within the last few days; some of them have already been downloaded thousands of times. (SSRN tells you exactly how many times.) I also have a bookmark for several sites involving Rhodesian Ridgeback dogs (I learned about the breed and found my new puppy via such a site); horse stables in Illinois (my daughter rides horses and we found out about her new stable this way); and a variety of federal regulatory agencies, including the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency, whose sites give you an ability to read and to print out thousands of regulations, press releases, and proposals.

The rise of the Internet must count as one of the most astonishing technological developments of the century. This is not least because nothing remotely like it was anticipated by those who created it, and because this supposedly government-free zone was a creation of the national government. We are used to hearing tales of the unintended bad consequences of government action; but the Internet is an unintended good consequence of government action. By the Department of Defense, no less: beginning in the 1960s, the Advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA) of the Department of Defense created a new computer network, originally called the Arpanet, with the specific purpose of permitting computers to interact with one another, thus allowing defense researchers at various universities to share computing resources. To the government's great surprise, the computer researchers used the Arpanet mostly to send e-mail, not to exchange data.

Starting in 1972, hundreds and then thousands of early users began to discover e-mail as a new basis for communication. In the early 1970s, the government sought to sell off the Arpanet to the private sector, contacting AT&T to see if it wanted to take over the Arpanet; but the company declined, concluding that the technology was incompatible with the AT&T network. (So much for the foresight of the private sector.) Eventually the Arpanet expanded to multiple uses, operating under the auspices of the National Science Foundation. By the late 1980s, a number of new networks emerged, some far more advanced than the Arpanet, and the term "Internet" came to be used for the federally subsidized network consisting of many linked networks running the same protocols. In 1989 the Arpanet was transferred to regional networks throughout the country.

A KEY INNOVATION CAME one year later. Having been intrigued by the design and the potential of the Internet, researchers at CERN, the European Laboratory for Particle Physics near Geneva, created the World Wide Web, a multimedia branch of the Internet. (It is signalled on computers by the ubiquitous "www" after "http://" and before domain names; "http://" stands for "hypertext transfer protocol," which was designed for global information transfer and part of the original design of the World Wide Web.) CERN researchers attempted to interest private companies in building the World Wide Web, but they declined. ("Too complicated": this was another case of hilariously inadequate private sector foresight.) Tim Berners-Lee, the lead researcher and web inventor, had to build it on his own.

The consequence of the World Wide Web was to link the 800 computer networks, and 160,000 computers, then attached to the Internet. Soon thereafter researchers at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana invented a breakthrough browser called Mosaic, which would make it easy for ordinary people, and not just experts, to use the Internet.

Hard as it now is to believe, the Internet began to become commercial only in the early 1990s, with legislation removing restrictions on commercial activity. It was during that time that government funding and oversight were almost entirely withdrawn. In 1995, the backbone of the national network was sold to a private consortium of corporations, and the government gave one company the exclusive right to register domain names. (You can now buy one for about $70.) Originally created by the government, the Internet is now largely free of federal supervision. To say the least,

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commercial activity has exploded. As late as 1996, educational sites dominated the list of the fifteen most often visited sites, and included no sites engaged in commerce; but almost all of the current "top fifteen" list engage in commercial activity. Moreover, the Internet, very much in use world-wide, is a distinctly American creation.

It is an understatement to say that the Internet has made life far more convenient for staggeringly many people. Though estimates are disputed, the sheer number of users grows rapidly every month. In 1990, there were 1.3 million total users; in 1992, 6.5 million; in 1994, 32 million; in 1996, 55 million; in 1997, 100 million; in 1998, 150 million; and at the present writing, over 200 million. More than 110 million Americans now use the Internet. In 1998, 99 million Windows-based personal computers were sold worldwide. In many families, stores have been to a greater or lesser degree replaced by websites; purchasing is increasingly a matter of pushing buttons. (In mid-1998, Amazon.com had 3.3 million customers; in mid-1999, it had nearly 11 million.) In some offices, telephones have become nearly obsolete, replaced by e-mail, which is quicker and more efficient. As every Internet parent knows, homework has been transformed; research projects often involve the World Wide Web rather than books. People can and do keep in touch with relatives and friends, with parents and children, in other states and other countries. On an amazing range of topics—Rhodesian Ridgebacks, horse stables in Illinois, recent environmental trends and regulations—information is astonishingly easy to get. Every home computer is now a world-class library.

II.

IT SHOULD BE no surprise that libertarians and others have been celebrating the Internet as a government-free zone. This has been the overwhelming "first generation" response to the Internet. In 1996, John Perry Barlow produced a proclamation that he called a Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace: "Governments of the Industrial World . . . I ask you of the past to leave us alone. You are not welcome among us. You have no sovereignty where we gather.... You have no moral right to rule us nor do you possess any methods of enforcement we have true reason to fear." But many people are uneasy about the emerging situation; and their best arguments point to possible harmful consequences for privacy, politics, and cultural life.

Andrew Shapiro and Lawrence Lessig have written impressive and worried books, rejecting libertarian homilies and suggesting, among other things, the need for a greater governmental role in control of the Internet. Shapiro and Lessig are democrats, arguing above all for more public consciousness about the dangers posed by the rise of the Internet; but they sharply diverge on whether the Internet offers more opportunity or more threat to individual control.

Shapiro's book is a mixed picture, with a heavy dose of optimism, even exhilaration. He celebrates what he calls "the control revolution," but he believes that it carries risk as well as promise. He hopes to devise ways for government to promote the promise while reducing the risk. What he urges is a kind of "balance" that would produce "a realistic compromise between personal liberty and individual obligation." Lessig's account is more learned, more ambitious, more innovative, and darker. He believes that the private power to create "code"—the architecture of the Internet—produces dangers to a number of important values, including privacy, free speech, sovereignty, and the open circulation of ideas. He thinks that courts and legislatures should do something about the emerging situation, but he doubts that they will. He thinks that we are, with respect to cyberspace, in a situation akin to that of Eastern Europe after the fall of Communism—exhilarated by new possibilities of individual freedom, but unprepared to manage, and even to perceive, the problems and the dangers that lie ahead. "It is the age of the ostrich," he says. Our excitement is that "of a teenager playing chicken, his car barreling down the highway, hands held far from the steering wheel. There are choices we could make; but we pretend that there is nothing we can do."

LET US BEGIN with Shapiro's more optimistic account. Shapiro thinks that the Internet magnifies the power of both citizens and consumers, fortifying both democracy and free markets. He notes that Slobodan Milosevic's efforts to close down an independent radio station were roundly defeated when the station re-routed its programming to the Internet, where it was available, in digital form, to computer users in Serbia and throughout the world; and so pro-democracy activists in Serbia have referred to their movement as the "Internet Revolution." The Internet makes it far more difficult for tyrants to close off the channels of political dissent, while at the same time allowing the international community to learn about government abuses and to speak to actual and prospective victims.

Shapiro emphasizes that, for many of us, the costs of communicating with centers of power, private and public, have been dramatically decreased. If a car company, a university, a state government—not to mention a manufacturer of computers or word-processing programs—has made a mistake, it will hear about that mistake from hundreds and perhaps thousands of people, sometimes on the same day. Since citizens can communicate so easily with government, democracy is a central beneficiary. And this marks a dramatic change from circumstances at the Constitution's founding, when it was thought to be impossible for the public to have continuing communication with its governors. Amartya Sen has observed that no famine has ever occurred in a democratic country with a free press; the power of publicity has been sufficient to avert famines, which are partly a product of social responses, not scarcity alone. If Sen's finding is taken as a dramatic illustration of a broader point—about how freedom of information can avert human suffering—then the Internet promises to produce incalculable benefits.

FOR CONSUMERS, CERTAINLY, the future appears truly limitless. To say that it is possible to use the Internet to buy cars, airline tickets, stocks, horses, and hotel rooms—to notice that people can act as their own travel agent or stockbroker—is to offer much less than the tip of the iceberg. (If you are shopping for a car, you can easily find crash test results not only from the United States government, and not only from private insurance companies, but also from Europe and Australia.) Shapiro emphasizes as well the new "ability of individuals to keep the media on guard," both by talking "back to those cultural gatekeepers who have traditionally assumed that their interaction with the public was a one-way street" and by giving individuals the remarkable power "to become publishers ourselves" by posting documents and thus making them available to millions of readers. Matt Drudge is just the most notorious example. Thus the effect of the Internet is to allow its users to "shake the foundations of the fourth estate and the culture business writ large."

Shapiro also stresses another point: our increasing ability to "personalize" our experience, by selecting information "packages" of our own choosing. (Nicholas Negroponte has called this "The Daily Me.") An increasing number of news personalization services now allow people to choose topics of particular interest, by including some topics—sports and entertainment, say—while excluding others.

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The Wall Street Journal provides something of this sort, and *The Jerusalem Post* has experimented with a reader-customized newspaper that can be printed on home computers and looks like an ordinary newspaper. This general trend toward personalization is part of a process by which intermediaries (such as general-interest newspapers and magazines) are increasingly replaced by more direct transactions between purchasers and providers. Consider, for example, the extraordinary recent growth of on-line investment, by which individuals (often uninformed and foolhardy) can buy and sell their own stocks almost instantaneously.

THIS IS A rosy picture, but Shapiro is disturbed by two emerging problems. The first comes from large enterprises: the efforts by the "anxious state" to control speech and creativity, and also by big companies, above all Microsoft, to push users in their preferred directions. A number of countries, including Singapore and China, have restricted access to politically unacceptable websites, and the United States responded to the astonishing level of pornography on the Internet with the patently unconstitutional Communications Decency Act, regulating "indecent" and "patently offensive" speech. Shapiro wants to insulate the "control revolution" from public regulation of this sort.

But he is troubled by private power, too. Shapiro thinks that the "slogan of cyber liberation doesn't seem to hold up. 'Where do you want to go today'? asks Microsoft; but in reality the company's guiding principle seems to be, Where do you want to go today within the Microsoft universe?" A part of the problem, Shapiro contends, is that "Microsoft has leveraged its position in the software-licensing process to force manufacturers into using Windows rather than competing operating systems." (This, it should be noted, is not the antitrust problem faced by Microsoft; the Department of Justice complains that Microsoft has forced people to adopt its Internet browser, and used Windows to do that, because most people want to have Windows, and Microsoft's Internet browser is bundled along with Windows.)

Another part of the problem is that Microsoft has tried "to capitalize on its built-in audience and become the ultimate information middleman." Thus users have been steered to particular places by means of a channel bar, a feature that users see whenever they turn on their Windows computer. "The channel bar does away with any pretense about Microsoft being a neutral player . . . . It features thirty commercial logos that the user can click to go straight to the websites of" particular companies. This means that Microsoft is directing users "toward the content it wants them to see." (Shapiro does not note that the channel bar was a bust with consumers, and has now been eliminated—points emphasized in Judge Thomas Jackson's recent findings of fact in the Microsoft case.)

In the same category of private manipulation of tastes, Shapiro thinks, can be found Amazon.com's much-criticized and now apparently abandoned practice of selling prominent positions on its website to book publishers, without informing customers that some prominent positions have been purchased. Shapiro is generally concerned about "push technology," by which companies send a "constant stream of content to a computer screen." And quite apart from the effects of public and private power, Shapiro is troubled by "oversteering," by which he means efforts by individual users to limit their own horizons. This is the dark side of personalization: the creation, by each individual, of a communications package that creates insulation from anything new, different, or jarring.

HENCE THE EMERGING problem of "freedom from speech." On a conventional speech-corner, or in a general interest newspaper, we may be confronted by ideas, people, and issues that we might have preferred to avoid.

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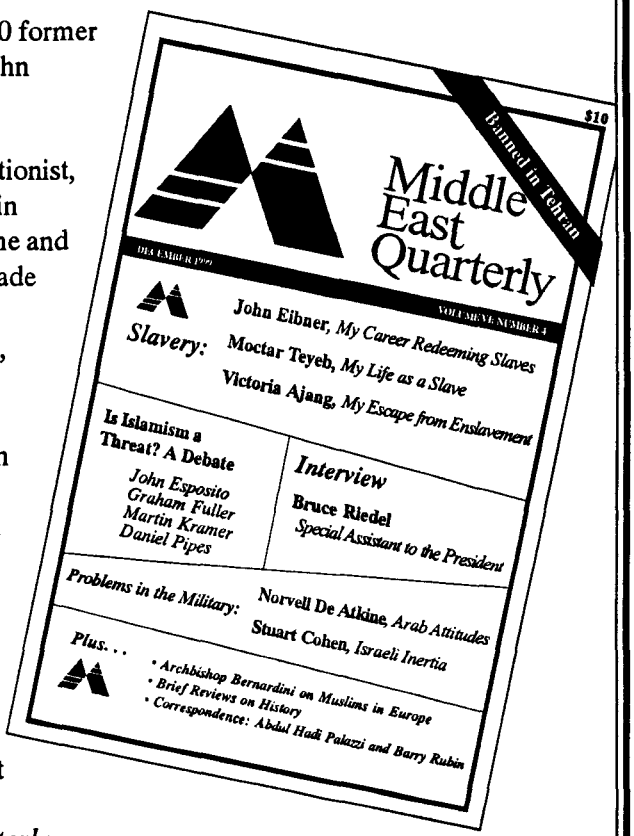

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This kind of confrontation is a private and public good; it exposes people to genuine problems and can force them to rethink their view of the world. In cyberspace, by contrast, people may enjoy a perfect power of avoidance (recall "the Daily Me") and this can be a serious problem for a democracy. A possible result of this technologically facilitated narcissism is to reduce "shared communal experience" and to produce a situation in which people "share good times with others online who enjoy the same narrow passions as we do."

If members of the Christian Coalition shun mainstream news and entertainment, Shapiro warns, they will end "with a pretty skewed view of the world," and they will also have a hard time getting along with non-members. Similar problems arise from the recent increase in "push-button politics," which may undermine deliberation and promote a system of insufficiently reflective government-by-referendum. The ultimate risk is excessive populism, in which government acts less in accordance with the perceived public good than with momentary pressures as registered on the Internet. Shapiro is also exercised by the loss of privacy to the monitoring and retentive capacities of the computer, and particularly by situations in which people are asked to give up their privacy in return for interactive services; he thinks that people will likely be willing to sell their privacy too cheaply.

Shapiro offers several suggestions for government action, designed to respond to dangers in the control revolution. He likes Europe's privacy directive, which requires data collectors to get explicit permission from people before gathering sensitive personal data. He favors a "privacy safety net," in the form of a "minimal level of personal information that cannot be taken from us" even if people are willing to barter it away "with the click of a mouse." Shapiro also insists that Internet gatekeepers, like television broadcasters, should have obligations to the public as "trustees of the greater good." As an example, Shapiro proposes requiring all gatekeepers to give their audiences easy access, through an icon visible on all viewscreens, to "PublicNet," a publicly subsidized online public forum where the views of community groups, nonprofits, and individuals could be heard. One of the purposes of PublicNet would be to increase the likelihood that people would be exposed to ideas that they might otherwise not encounter, thus turning the Internet into something more like a street-corner or a general interest magazine. Shapiro also argues that government should support local gateways of online networks having "a firm commitment to providing space for citizen dialogue." Shapiro's points are illuminating, lucid, lively, and sensible, if sometimes a bit superficial, which is not so bad for readers unfamiliar with these important topics.

Forsaking

I lie awake sometimes and trace the fugitive
memory of bodies and of pleasure—
and once in particular on a low sofa
in full view of others (we did not care),
I felt her heart under the corduroy jumper
beating wildly, and her gentle mouth,
which tried to feed my hunger regarding itself

but failed, because it did not know what it sought,
her heart or my hunger; or later in a tiny room
I slid a garment off and her body's heat
answered, and her smile, in a kind of equilibrium
in the perfect stillness of our pretence to wisdom,
and we did it that day so it burned in memory,
like the salt sweat that glazed our bodies:

but it was no good. The solitude I found with her,
which made her weep, woke from its carnal trance
as loneliness and taught me to suffer.
Now all is covered, all is nonchalance
between us. We have built lives, citizens
apart. Despite the fact that this is years past,
she has not forgiven me that I did not last.

Karl Kirchwey

III.

SHAPIRO WANTS GOVERNMENT to monitor, and to correct, what companies do when they create "code." The whole subject of "code" is treated far more systematically in Lessig's similarly lucid but more penetrating and more dour presentation. But what is "code"? The term has an unsettling *Blade Runner* quality. Lessig means "code" to refer to architecture, understood broadly to include physical constraints on what can and cannot be done. The real world has a code or architecture in this sense, some of it natural (gravity, darkness at night, mountains, oceans), some of it humanly created (streets, parks, speed bumps).

Lessig believes that code is the great blindness of cyberspace libertarians, who believe that the Internet is a realm of liberty, and that the basic task of government is to stay out. What they miss, he argues, is how code, which could take any number of forms, can serve either to promote or to constrain freedom on the Internet. Lessig's basic submission is that in cyberspace, code is law. It regulates what can and cannot be done, and often it does so invisibly. Code might protect or compromise privacy; it might destroy the rights of authors or defend them extraordinarily well; it might steer people to websites favored by certain companies; it might block sites that are politically incorrect; it might facilitate or prevent free access by children. Code might do any number of things.

The idea becomes clearer if we attend to Lessig's fourfold classification of the ways of regulating behavior. First, regulators might use the law; legal bans on heroin use and child pornography are examples. Second, the market may do the regulating, by increasing the price of behavior that we seek to discourage, as with cigarette taxes. Third, regulators might try to change social norms and attitudes; consider educational campaigns involving drug use and safe sex. And the last and least recognized approach involves "code." If people are speeding as they approach toll booths, regulators might create speed bumps; if people are trespassing on government property, regulators might build special fences; if people are stealing car radios, regulators might ensure that car radios will work only in their original vehicles.

Lessig thinks that code has been frequently neglected as an instrument of social control. He attributes the neglect to the fact that in the real world, much of code seems natural, not designed by anyone, and even immutable. In cyberspace, however, code is emphatically designed rather than natural—people produce code—and it sets the basic governing rules of interactions. This is because the architecture of the program—which can take any number of forms—will determine what can happen and who can do what to whom.

Against the cyberspace libertarians, Lessig insists that cyberspace is not any-

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thing in particular; what it is depends on what is (chosen as) its code. It is possible to design a system in which communication may be anonymous; it is possible to design a system in which e-mail is kept forever, forwarded to the FBI, or immediately destroyed; it is possible to design a system that keeps track of all of the user's purchases and visits, thus enabling sellers, and others, to know what the user likes to buy and to see (hence the recent emergence of "web bugs," recording activity at sites and reporting details to advertisers, without notifying the computer's user); it is possible to design a system that automatically includes certain bookmarks, or that draws the user's attention to certain sites. It is easy to collect data about purchasers' preferences without informing people that this is being done.

We could even imagine a system—it is on the horizon—in which code is designed to give copyright holders perfect dominion over their creations. In such a system, any "use" at all would have to be authorized by the author. Lessig concludes that it is the law-like nature of code that makes cyberspace into something other than a realm of freedom, a governance-free zone. His fundamental claim is that it is important to promote existing values, in particular constitutional values, by "translating" them into the distinctive context of cyberspace, so as to ensure that they are maintained there as well as elsewhere. (Lessig is hardly an unambiguous fan of governmental regulation. He notes, for example, that government might regulate code precisely in order to make the Internet more regulable. In a post-publication vindication of one of Lessig's fears, the FBI recently requested the Internet Engineering Task Force—the body entrusted with keeping the protocols on the Internet—to change the protocols to make wiretapping easier.)

LESSIG'S GENERAL CONCERN is that the power to create and alter code creates a range of dangers for longstanding social values. More particularly, he thinks that this power creates problems for privacy, free speech, and the free circulation of ideas. Objecting that outcomes are now being reached without our thinking about them, he wants the public to choose how to handle the resulting problems. But he does offer his own views. Thus he objects to the "monitoring of today" on the ground that with modern technology, it is extremely easy to collect a wide range of facts that people might reasonably seek to keep secret. "Data collection is the dominant activity of commercial web sites. Some 92% of them collect personal data from web users which they then aggregate, sort and use."

One possible result of this process of collecting—it is actually a variety of surveillance—is that web sites will attempt to engage in manipulation, based on what they have come to learn about you. Thus Lessig wants government to promote code that will increase individual power to retain personal information, through "far greater deployment of encryption code"; and he favors code that will allow individuals to decide what data can be collected by others, through a system in which the "user sets her preferences once—specifies how she would negotiate privacy, what she's willing to give up." On Lessig's plan, that set of preferences would interact with diverse sites, so as to disclose personal information only on the user's conditions.

WITH RESPECT TO freedom of speech, Lessig favors a system that would protect children from inappropriate sites by means of an identification system, one that would require sites to block access to "any self-identified minor." But Lessig's more fundamental concerns mirror Shapiro's: he is worried that private code-makers will push people to their preferred sites, and he is also worried that individuals will engage in excessive filtering. "We individually may want to avoid issues of poverty or inequality, and so we might prefer to tune those facts out of our universe. But from the standpoint of society, it would be terrible if citizens could simply tune out problems that were not theirs."

Lessig is especially critical of PICS, the World Wide Web Consortium's "Platform for Internet Content Selection," an innovation that has generally been greeted with great enthusiasm. PICS allows filtering of content; it would permit users, or employers, or others, to "personalize" the Internet by filtering out content that is deemed inappropriate. Lessig believes that this system is objectionable especially because if "you can't see what content there is, you can't know what's being blocked." Ordinary people are hardly in a position to use PICS to filter out sites, and they must therefore rely on one of a small number of companies able and willing to do this work for them, even though people have little information about what exactly is being blocked. Lessig notes, correctly, that the Constitution applies only to government—to "the state"—and hence private actors, such as Microsoft and others principally responsible for the creation of code, can do whatever they wish without worrying about the first amendment; but he supplies what he sees as a proper "translation" of the First Amendment, one that would subject the design of code to the First Amendment, on the grounds that the power to create code, though nominally private, is government-like in its effects.

One of Lessig's most interesting discussions involves "intellectual property"—the law governing the property rights not to "things" but to information, as in the law of copyright. Under current law, you cannot copy what other people write without their permission; but you can make "fair use" of their writing, in reproducing small portions. (Hence the quotations from Shapiro and Lessig in this review do not violate the copyright laws.) Most people are afraid that the property rights of owners of intellectual property will be lost in cyberspace. Can't anyone now copy anything, basically for free? Lessig thinks that this is all wrong. He believes that the real danger is the opposite—that owners of intellectual property will have perfect control over what is distributed, blocking any use, however small. "The lesson in the future will be that copyright is protected far too well. The problem will not be copy-right but copy-duty—the duty of owners of protected property to make that property accessible."

The reason for this anxiety is code, which can create innovative methods for monitoring access and for blocking any reproduction at all, even small excerpts. The name of this innovation is "trusted systems," a technology that can prevent access entirely, thus giving authors protection of their works through "a privatized alternative to law." This is a problem insofar as it prevents the free circulation of ideas, which is an interest protected by existing copyright law insofar as it authorizes people to make "fair use" of copyrighted material, whatever the owner may wish. For cyberspace, Lessig urges that the law should allow individuals "fair use" notwithstanding code innovations that would prevent it. He claims that code should not be allowed to prevent an "intellectual commons"; he wants the law to prevent authors from having perfect control over who has access to their writings.

LESSIG HAS A more general theme, which he leaves mostly in the background. Most of his book deals with code that is "closed," in the sense that its content is commercial property and in that way secret, and cannot be altered by users. Microsoft's code is closed in that sense. But "open code," now with a small market share but a genuine competitor to Microsoft, is very different. It keeps "its core code public . . . Anyone can take it, and use it as they wish. Anyone can take it, and come to understand how it works." Both private and public regulation are greatly diminished to the extent that code

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is open. Lessig expresses a great deal of enthusiasm for open code. While it is not clear what he wants government to do about it, it is clear that he would not be unhappy if government were to help it to succeed in the marketplace.

This is a large and impressive collection of ideas and suggestions; but Lessig doubts that anyone, in the current climate, is making any choices at all. He believes that some of these choices pose constitutional issues, but he thinks that courts are "stuck," partly because "they can't be seen to be creative." He thinks that the result is "to exclude" from constitutional scrutiny "the most important aspect of the cyberspace's law." Lessig also thinks that legislatures are disabled, because "we are weary with governments," and "profoundly skeptical of democratic processes." Thus government's self-described role, with respect to cyberspace, "is to simply get out of the way." This, Lessig contends, is a momentous mistake, not least because it disables the public from making important choices.

IV.

SHAPIRO AND LESSIG have written emphatically "second-generation" books on the Internet. No longer breathless over the possibilities, these writers are sharply critical of cyberspace's libertarian orthodoxy. The importance of their arguments lies in their shared concern about the lack of public discussion of the emerging problems, and the possible adverse effects not only of public power but also of private power over both consumption and citizenship—and particularly over the possible adverse effects of private manipulation, which is often invisible to consumers.

Yet the most general question, unfortunately, is not addressed in detail by either writer. Will the Internet's astonishingly chaotic, even anarchic, qualities, alongside antitrust law and a generally competitive market, ensure that market forces will suffice as a response to these legitimate anxieties? Consider the fact that many companies have responded to concerns about privacy with reliable and explicit privacy guarantees; and recall that Microsoft's channel bar was an utter failure with consumers. In any case, no company, not even Microsoft, exercises serious control over access to content.

Shapiro and Lessig also overstate, I think, the centrality of the Internet, currently or in the foreseeable future, to human experience. Notwithstanding its large and growing importance, the Internet remains only one of a wide range of sources of ideas and information. Books, television, newspapers, and magazines all still exist, and they are complementary and sometimes competitive goods. The fact that the Internet is part of a much bigger picture makes the authors' fears seem overdrawn.

Both Shapiro and Lessig appeal to some undeniably attractive ideals. There is a genuine risk to privacy on the Internet, which enables third parties—employers, companies, government—to obtain information that users would reasonably like to keep confidential. If people want to read left-wing magazines, or learn all about *Star Trek*, or study the political views of George W. Bush or Patrick Buchanan, or buy Led Zeppelin's CDs, they should be able to do so without letting the world know about it. To some extent, the Internet market is responding to this concern, with reliable privacy guarantees on many websites. There is a market for privacy, as for everything else; and sites that do not provide privacy are likely to lose business for that very reason. Still, to the extent that the response is only partial, legal reforms—such as the European Union's privacy directive or Lessig's more inventive solution (allowing individual users to set privacy limits)—would make a great deal of sense for the United States. For the same reason, it makes sense to consider rules that would prevent certain sites from making their materials available to children.

THE QUESTION OF intellectual property is more complicated. Lessig is worried about the free circulation of ideas, thinking that authors will use "trusted systems" so as to prevent what would ordinarily be fair use. He demonstrates pretty convincingly that, contrary to the conventional wisdom, the Internet may actually increase authorial control over intellectual property. But it is not plain that this is a serious danger. Are owners of intellectual property likely to use technological opportunities to maintain perfect control over the reproduction of their writing? To say the least, most authors like their work to get a certain degree of exposure; and surely the best prediction is that authors and owners will encourage a measure of spreading. It is quite reasonable to suggest, as Lessig does, that some version of the right to "fair use" should be applied in cyberspace. As a speculation about likely behavior by intellectual property owners, however, Lessig seems to me to exaggerate the threat to the free circulation of ideas.

The largest concerns involve democracy. Shapiro and Lessig write as "deliberative democrats"; they think that a well-functioning political order requires not only accountability but also a high degree of reflection and deliberation. One of their central goals is to restore reasoned and informed discussion to its proper place in democracy. They seek democratic deliberation about the social role of the Internet (Lessig's emphasis), and they want the Internet to promote such deliberation (Shapiro's emphasis). They are quite correct to raise concerns about entirely personalized, individuated communications packages: if each person was able to design his own preferred speech culture, too many people would simply hear echoes of their own voices.

A functioning democratic order, not to mention a flourishing culture, requires that people hear views that are unfamiliar and challenging, and even views that are hard to take. To be sure, the Internet allows people to expand their horizons. It is now easy for Americans to read foreign newspapers if they want an external perspective on domestic events. And it is also important to stress that everyone is selective, to one or another degree, about information; there is nothing necessarily bad about a system in which companies attempt to offer you products, including informational products, similar to those that you have enjoyed before. Still, no one should doubt that the Internet can produce an excessive narrowing, simply because it allows personalized packages at very low cost.

CONSIDER IN THIS regard a fascinating phenomenon, one with important implications for the Internet and for Shapiro and Lessig. I refer to "group polarization," a phenomenon whereby group discussion typically leads individuals toward a more extreme point in the direction of that very group's initial tendency. A group of people tentatively disposed in favor of gun control is likely, after discussion, to think that gun control is a wonderful idea; a group of people who think affirmative action is probably harmful is likely, after discussion, to think affirmative action should be abolished; a group of people moderately disposed to be critical of President Clinton is likely, after discussion, to think that President Clinton is quite terrible.

Since the Internet leads to many discussions among like-minded people, it can fuel extremism (a point emphasized by Patricia Wallace in her fascinating book *The Psychology of the Internet*), particularly to the extent that people are devising their own communications packages, constituting themselves as on-line groups, and insulating themselves from diverse views. There is also reason to worry that the Internet may aggravate government's current tendency to be extremely responsive to short-term swings in public opinion. Shapiro proposes the

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establishment of a taxpayer-supported PublicNet, which would provide users with visible access to continuing public discussions from diverse perspectives. It is hardly a panacea—people may ignore, and be annoyed by, the icon—but it is a fine idea, likely to do little harm and possibly some good.

YET ALL THESE problems should not be overstated; and I think that Shapiro and Lessig overstate them. Only crazy people spend all their time on the Internet. What most of us find there is just a part of the information that we receive. In any case, many websites have general-interest features. A newspaper's site is not likely to be much different from a "hard" newspaper, and many people use the web precisely in order to get access to a wide range of general interest magazines and newspapers. Far from narrowing horizons, the Internet often expands them.

Moreover, technology and market pressures have generally worked well to prevent the Internet itself from being a place for monopolistic control. Indeed, it is the sheer diversity and heterogeneity of sites that is overwhelming. For some purposes, Microsoft may perhaps be a monopolist; but even Microsoft cannot (and does not seek to) steer people toward politically preferred viewpoints and away from what it considers politically incorrect. Lessig's discussion of the "open code" movement is intriguing, but the very fact that "open code" exists, and is an emerging competitive force, tends to qualify his alarm about the law-like features of code. It is too early to have a full sense of the advantages and the disadvantages of open code. But its market success suggests that ordinary purchasing decisions will counteract some of the problems with private power over closed code.

Shapiro and Lessig also neglect an important emerging issue: the easy availability of remarkable communications technologies to some but not to others, in a way that threatens to exacerbate existing disparities in social opportunities. For many Americans, including many American children, the Internet has already become like some combination of telephones, televisions, and libraries—second-nature, a familiar part of life, a place where you go if you want to communicate with others or learn about products, Rhodesian Ridgebacks, political candidates, history, finance, anything at all. But tens of millions of Americans remain computer illiterates. And the same inequalities can be found among nations: about one-half of Internet users are American, and in many countries e-mail is unreliable and the Internet is barely used at all. I wish that Shapiro and Lessig had discussed the implications of these disparities, and the question of what governments might do to make the new opportunities more generally available.

The real value of these books lies less in their concrete recommendations than in their skepticism about libertarian platitudes, their insistence on the need for public attention to emerging problems, and their spirit of uncertainty and wariness about possible consequences of the Internet. The celebration of the increasingly remarkable technological possibilities continues, as well it should; but the celebration should be accompanied by close attention, from consumers and citizens alike, to concrete consequences for privacy, free speech, and the open circulation of ideas. ■

Inner Cities

By ROY PORTER

Cities in Civilization by Peter Geoffrey Hall

(Pantheon, 1,169 pp., $40)

CITY HISTORIAN *extraordinaire* Peter Hall has produced in *Cities in Civilization* a stunning, if occasionally puzzling, book. I shall return later to one key aspect which gives pause for thought—precisely what sorts of findings does he hope his inquiries have generated? Another is the rather more banal fact that this is not so much a single opus but—rather like a baker's-dozen version of the Trinity or Caesar's Gaul—four "books" in one—or, more precisely, if one adds the future-gazing Conclusion, five. We can, of course, count ourselves fortunate that Hall, a geographer who has produced exceptionally challenging studies of modern urbanism, is so generous to his readers—a quartet for the price of a solo! But there remains something disconcertingly discrete and self-enclosed about the four "books" making up this academic equivalent of megalopolis, even if the whole enterprise is patently driven by a single insistent question: given that cities have always been the motors of civilization, what is it that makes certain cities at certain times dynamic and creative?

Book One addresses innovations in the cultural sphere. Since it comprises the most ambitious section of Hall's endeavour, I shall examine it in some detail. But first and briefly the key themes of the other three Books must be mentioned. Book Two, "The City as Innovative Milieu," probes the elements that have made six specific cities singularly pathbreaking in manufacturing technology since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution: Manchester in textiles, Glasgow in shipbuilding, Berlin in electrical industry, Detroit in automobiles, Palo Alto (Silicon Valley) in microchip technology, and Tokyo-Kanagawa in personal computers and telecommunications. Through comparative scrutiny, Hall aims to isolate the common elements, the "innovative milieu" predisposing to technical originality.

Book Three proceeds to explore the novel "marriage of art and technology" unique to the high noon of mass culture in the United States. Why was it that Hollywood became the hothouse of the movie dream world, and Memphis the cradle of modern rock music from Elvis Presley onwards? After all, showbiz had long been New York-dominated. Initially, at least, both Southern California and Tennessee were regarded as areas of cultural barbarism.

The final Book analyzes the responsiveness of great cities to challenges that threaten to overwhelm them. Uniquely populous, ancient Rome survived by developing public works (aqueducts and circuses); Victorian London, the Rome of the modern world, reacted by pioneering drains, police, and prisons; Napoleon III's Paris Haussmannized its boulevards; in the half century after 1880 New York invented the skyscraper and saved itself from gridlock with bold municipal transportation systems; Los Angeles responded to size and sprawl with faith in the freeways; mid-twentieth-century Stockholm's route to a stable and contented society lay in massive investment in public housing; and Margaret Thatcher sought economic renewal for her capital through state

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underwriting of private property investment, notably in the defunct Dockland zone. In each case Hall elegantly shows how every successive "solution" spawned fresh problems in its turn.

Each of these parts—they run to some thousand close-packed pages—displays a phenomenal range of erudition, and is handled with consummate organizational skill. I know of no more brilliant brief analysis of what makes Japanese capitalism tick or the peculiar tensions between Thatcher and her Environment Minister, Michael Heseltine, which precipitated the tragicomedy of the Canary Wharf white elephant (the "Mrs. Thatcher Memorial Tower"). And all these strengths are no less visible in Book One, which sets out to crack the secrets of those cities which, down the long march of world history, have proved culturally most innovative. Yet that discussion also reveals some of the ambiguities of Hall's enterprise.

WE START WITH Athens. In its golden age that city-state staged revolutions in art, sculpture, architecture. It produced the birth of theater, philosophy, and political thinking, science and medicine, as we know them. Athens pioneered democratic political participation: it extended an astonishing freedom to the individual citizen while kindling a potent faith in the value of the collectivity. How did all that come about? Hall expertly itemizes the key factors. While in many ways a self-sufficient polis, Athens was marvellously cosmopolitan. Unlike certain rival city-states, it was populous and prosperous. Commerce thrived, and imperial triumphs enabled it to exact the tribute from its colonies which upheld morale and funded its stupendous programme of public art works. Slavery granted its male citizenry the leisure to pursue politics, athletics, the arts, and the life of the mind.

Hall then leaps two thousand years to Renaissance Florence, which self-consciously aimed to restore the cultural and intellectual glories of Graeco-Roman antiquity. In architecture, sculpture, and painting, Giotto, Brunelleschi, Donatello, Masachio, Michelangelo and their acolytes clocked up fabulous technical and imaginative innovations. In the writings of Boccaccio, Petrarch, Leonardo Bruni and others, humanism more than accomplished the revival of classical models. If less wedded to democracy than the Athenians, the Florentines exulted in a fervent civic patriotism, at a time when other Italian republics were becoming the playthings of princes.

Once again, Hall probes the Florentine success and finds it easy to isolate its special factors. Like Athens, Florence—thanks to its clothing industry and its unique banking sector—was larger and more affluent than most other Italian urban polities, and hence it served as a honey-pot to aspirant intellectuals and artists from all over the peninsula. It long enjoyed military success, enabling it to envisage itself as heir to the Roman Republic. Happily lacking the scholastic constraints of an ecclesiastically controlled university, Florence was free to search out intellectual and artistic expressions which actually met the needs and the hopes of its citizenry.

A mere hop and we are in England. If golden-age Athens invented the life of the mind and Florence recovered the fine arts, Elizabethan and Jacobean London shone in the theater. Hall reminds us of the mushrooming of playhouses at the time: at least seventeen were founded on a few separate theaterland sites—Shoreditch to the north of the City, Bankside (the location of the Globe) south of the Thames, Blackfriars to the west. These offered a stage for the amazing total of 7,000 new plays performed in the decades up to the closing of the playhouses by the Puritans. Several playwrights, managers, and actors struck it rich—notably Edward Alleyn, who died the equivalent of a millionaire, and including Shakespeare himself, lured to the capital from the Midlands, who may have been netting at his peak anything up to £700 a year—the income of a plush peer.

Elizabethan London, Hall observes, shared significant characteristics with Athens and Florence. (It, too, lacked a university). London's theaters were open and populist: any citizen could afford the penny it cost to huzza Henry V or hiss Shylock as a groundling. The drama pandered to popular patriotism. Yet there were differences, too. Whereas drama in Athens was a civic enactment, with formal judges and prizes, and whereas Florentine culture was deeply indebted to noble patrons, in London it was the market—market capitalism—that sustained popular culture "in the public sphere," as Jürgen Habermas would put it, thus giving it its particular slant—that cocktail of comedy, tragedy, and melodrama, shaken to please them all, so triumphantly embodied in Shakespeare himself.

ANOTHER JUMP AND it's Vienna. This time, instead of a brief but brilliant burst of cultural fireworks, Hall sees Vienna's role on the world-historical stage as being quite protracted—lasting from 1750 down to the Great War. And instead of the visual arts or drama, the medium of supremacy was music. There were two distinct phases: first the era of the creation of classical music: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. And then, a century later, those who challenged that tradition: Bruckner, Mahler, and, above all, Schoenberg—bridged, of course, by other musical geniuses, especially the Strausses, content to play to the preferences of a music-besotted pleasure city.

Hall identifies the elements distinctive to each of these phases. Late Enlightenment eminence was sustained by an affluent, aristocratic imperial elite whose assured Catholic values found in music the least controversial and unsettling mode of cultural investment. The *fin de siècle* moment, by sharp contrast, was the work of bold "new men," battling against, if also patronized by, defenders of those traditional values. Composers such as Mahler were symptomatic of the bid for cultural *entrée* stemming from a new and overwhelmingly Jewish bourgeoisie, equally conspicuous in matters intellectual—in logical positivism, in psychology in Freud and his circle, in satire in Karl Kraus, and in the theater in Arthur Schnitzler.

But why Vienna? Once again, Hall sifts the components. Imperial opulence was a *sine qua non*. The Hapsburg Empire was always uniquely cosmopolitan, luring in outsiders—artists and entrepreneurs from Moravia to Galicia—leading to the creative symbiosis of the traditions of Bohemia, Hungary, and Northern Italy, to say nothing of German-speaking Austria itself, heartland of the waltz. Austria's distinctive political parabola also counted for much: as the Hapbsburg Empire became a conspicuous anachronism in the years preceding the Great War, what alternative could remain for its subjects but to excel and escape in some other sphere—the life of aesthetics or of the unconscious, or a frivolous hedonism, all merry-making and make-believe?

THE NEXT STOP on Hall's *Kulturstadt* package tour is the Paris of the *belle époque*, and here we are back to painting—Impressionism, the insult of the "fauves," and finally Picasso and Cubism. Once again, Hall spotlights the elements which were vital to the birth of "modernism": deep cultural roots; a wealthy city, whose cultural brokers were quick to grasp that fortunes were to be made out of the *refusés* and the *avant garde* no less than from impeccable taste; a transitional populace licking its wounds after the horrors of the Franco-Prussian War and Commune and hence disposed to divert its attentions to the arts.

And finally, there is Weimar Berlin, the "paradigm and parody of the creative city." Once more it is theater which is center stage. Erwin Piscator's political theater and Bertolt Brecht's technical innovations

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dominate Hall's discussion, but, ever modestly omniscient, he also offers us clever capsule accounts of Expressionism (Grosz), early German cinema (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Nosferatu*, *Metropolis*, etc.), and street politics (Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg). The reasons for Berlin's hour of glory on the cultural stage are once more evaluated. Like quattrocento Florence and Elizabethan London, Berlin's social order was undergoing extremely rapid change—its arrogant prewar Prussian Junkerdom suffering a tremendous post-1918 identity crisis. As with the other cities surveyed, Berlin was in the throes of an exponential growth which triggered a questioning of sociopolitical and cultural authority; it was also the cutting-edge of certain new technologies, notably the electrical media, thus catalyzing cultural innovations.

In a series of close-ups spanning nearly three millennia, Hall explores (in Book One) the interaction between city and civilization with singular persistence. Admirers of his previous works will long have been aware that no writer in the English language can expatiate with such command on the anatomy and the physiology of the urban—how cities are fed and governed, why they ripen and rot. *Cities in Civilization* will come as a revelation in revealing Hall's grasp of the artistic and the intellectual as well, showing how profitably he has pondered the city's role as the crucible of culture. In range and scope, he is the contemporary Lewis Mumford, though, unlike that doleful obituarist of the city ("from Megalopolis to Necropolis"), he is not a prophet of urban doom.

Yet he does perhaps share one goal with Mumford and many of his successors, and here lies the enigma at the core of the enterprise. Rather like one seeking the Holy Grail, Hall assures us from the outset that he is not content to trace and interpret the history of how cities created culture: he is seeking a *theory* of their relations, a philosophy of why it is that some, but by no means all, cities generate cultural (or industrial) pyrotechnics. Why was it Athens and not Corinth, why Florence and not Verona, why Berlin and not Munich? To give him his due, Hall also signals a becoming skepticism about this heady undertaking. His early pages pour gouts of cold water on Marxist and pseudo-Marxist "solutions"; totemic names like Benjamin, Adorno, Foucault, and Baudrillard crop up with a merciful absence of hushed reverence; and doubts are raised about the utility of such categories as "modernity" and the "postmodern." Later discussions likewise treat reductionistic theories of cycles of innovation, associated with such economists as Joseph Schumpeter, Nikolai Kondratieff, and Simon Kuznets, with some caution.

Still, Hall seems somehow mesmerized by the prospect of coming up with a "theory," and quite substantial sections of his volume are given over to the quest. This is, I think, a mare's nest. After all, the notion of "innovative milieu" smacks of the circular, and the very idea of "collective creativity" can never be anything other than a subjective category, existing primarily in the eye of the beholder. One could just as easily propose that Sparta was no less "creative" than Athens, but in the arts of war; but the arts of war today, of course, win little kudos in the eyes of Hall, or you, or me. In that respect, it should be evident that the enterprise of theorizing "collective creativity" is as intrinsically dubious as the attempt to explain individual creativity in terms of birth order or zodiac sign.

In any case, if we were to be serious about framing a theory, Hall has fatally loaded the dice from the outset. Any rigorous attempt at model-building would need to start from a credible sample, and it would have to take negative examples no less than positive instances into account. This Hall singularly omits to do. Thus—quite apart from the fact that this book is essentially "Western"—we are given a long chapter on Athens, but (oddly) hardly a word about the cultural achievements of Rome or Byzantium. This immediately begs the question; it makes it look as if it is assumed to be open, pluralistic, democratic societies, rather than hierarchical or theocratic ones, which are disposed to cultural novelty. But it would not be difficult to construct a counter-argument supporting the cultural innovativeness of either of those Mediterranean capitals. (Hall might in this respect have built upon David Hume's celebrated essay on refinement in the arts.)

Other aspects of Hall's selection also seem puzzling. Was no medieval town at all culturally innovative? Their complete omission seem to mark an *a priori* supposition that such innovation must be, almost by definition, a secular phenomenon. Similarly, it is extremely odd that the Low Countries are totally excluded. In the light of Simon Schama's *The Embarrassment of Riches*, surely the Amsterdam of Rembrandt and Descartes (or, for that matter, various other Netherlandish cities) has at least as strong a claim to inclusion as Elizabethan London. And if one is to have a London chapter then why Shakespeare's lifetime rather than the Augustan era? Surely that was the time when the capital turned itself into a sublime object of cultural display, evident in Restoration comedy, in Defoe, the *Spectator*, Samuel Johnson's Juvenalian satire *London*, and the festering of Grub Street. Attention to that age would have been singularly fitting, given Hall's insightful observation that John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* became a key source of inspiration for Bertolt Brecht's quintessentially Weimar *Dreigroschenoper*.

My aim is not to nitpick. But one cannot possibly end up with a satisfactory theory of cultural innovation by simply fishing half a dozen specimens, however impressive, from the ocean of world history. And in any case my suspicion is that the quest for such a theory is a will-o'-the-wisp. Doubtless, we can end up, like Hall, by isolating a fistful of factors which tend to be, in greater or lesser degree, present in the super cities. Such centers are typically big, expanding, and wealthy; they are often cosmopolitan, they commonly draw in a pool of talent from outside; they are generally undergoing rapid, destabilizing social change. But who needs to be told that? In some ways, instead of looking for the common factors behind cultural creativity, it would be more illuminating (or at least more stimulating reading) to root out the factors differentiating the successful cities.

The same paradox—a richness in the handling of detail accompanied by a poverty of theoretical payoffs—also pervades the other sections of the book. Asking what made Manchester such a hub of industrial innovation, Hall thus rummages through the potential candidates:

> What disposed some areas to take more quickly to the new system than others? Was it natural resources? Location and transport facilities? A developed capitalistic commerce or access to foreign technology? Regional advantages in education? A background of urban handicraft, centres of consumption, or associated external economies? A flourishing domestic industry? Favourable systems of inheritance? Freedom from capricious aristocracy, from serfdom, or from guild obstructionism?

—only to go on to conclude: "The answer, in the case of Manchester in 1770, was: all of the above." In short, you need the right ingredients to bake a good cake. This is hardly news.

Still, if you believe, with Aby Warburg, that God is in the details, this fashionable academic preoccupation with theory will not get in the way of enjoyment of this triumph of erudition and analysis. The city is a miracle, and Peter Hall has no peer as its biographer. ■

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NEW YORK DIARIST

The I's Have It

POSTMODERNISM IS IN THE streets! A wise and streetwise friend has been telling me about a new trend among some ghetto kids in New York City called "eye-fornication." My friend reports that several teenagers, after being arrested for murder, told the cops that they had shot their victim because he looked at them in a way that caused them intolerable psychological discomfort: he had "eye-fornicated" them. If the trend persists, soon mothers and fathers will be packing Ray-Bans along with peanut butter and jelly in their children's lunch boxes. A possible bright side: The new terminology may be evidence that, in our most desiccated inner-city neighborhoods, some young people are turning away from television and starting to read, even if it's Lacan. And they have stopped saying "fuck."

HOLLYWOOD LOVES THE POSTMODERN notions of splintered selves and simulated selves and fluid selves. Shadows of these speculations appear in movies like *Six Degrees of Separation*, *Single White Female*, and, currently, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, films that present characters who connive to inhabit other people's identities. In literary works like Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Double*, Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Sharer*, and Saul Bellow's *The Victim*, the portrait of psychic division is a portrait of private, individual depths. But, in these movies, manifold psychic reality reveals itself exclusively between people, as if human interiority could only be expressed in social situations. All of these movies hinge on a crime, or crimes, and the crime ends with the police, and the whole thing will work itself out, presumably, in court. Human interiority gets solved along rational, public lines. (The only way to solve Tom Ripley the serial killer is to catch him and put him on trial.) In real life, however, our interiority goes on and on, away from other people; we cannot solve it and we cannot cure it. I wish some purveyor of America's increasingly sophisticated popular culture would try his or her hand at what really takes place inside us.

I'VE BEEN THINKING A LOT ABOUT everyday postmodernism because I have a postmodern problem. There is a writer named Lee Siegel, and he is not me. I have been aware of him for a while, but it's only recently that his presence has started to plague me. He is a university professor who up until a few months ago wrote and published books on India. Every once in a while, someone would congratulate me, innocently or not so innocently, on the appearance of something about Indian mythology or a review of a monograph on Indian eunuchs. Here is an example. At a party, a woman approaches:

"Are you Lee Siegel?"

"Well" [*downward modest glance*], "yes, I am."

"*The* Lee Siegel?"

"You're too kind."

"I just want you to know . . ."

"Yes?"

". . . that your commentary on men without testicles on the subcontinent is groundbreaking."

"Thank you."

"May I ask what's next?"

"A long essay. Even more revolutionary."

"About? Do tell."

"Women without testicles."

BUT THE SITUATION HAS NOW TAKEN a bedeviling turn. Professor Lee Siegel has published a work of fiction, a novel that received rave reviews in *The New York Times Book Review* and from one of the *Times*' daily book critics. What's more, Professor Siegel has begun to review fiction in the *Book Review*, which means that his literary activities are running parallel to mine. A few weeks ago, he offered his appraisal of a novel by a Russian author, and, since I, too, have written on Russian subjects, some people (i.e., my in-laws) were confused. A friend has a theory about all this. She says that because I tweaked the *Times* and the *Book Review* last year, the *Book Review* editors promoted Siegel's novel with a full-page review—with my friend's customary impetuosity, she points out that it is a first novel, published by an academic press—and gave him an assignment in my bailiwick as revenge. That the *Book Review* sent the hardcover edition of the Russian novel to me after Siegel's review appeared, rather than to Siegel, clinched the matter for her. Though my friend is one of the happiest, most astute people I have ever met, hers is the darkest of visions, a vision of some of the most respected figures in literary and journalistic life as thin-skinned, vindictive, and bored. It is a preposterous vision. The fact is that Siegel is a talented man. His observations on Indian eunuchs show an uncanny grasp of their condition. True, I find his novel—an interminable postmodern exercise in the split between author, narrator, and character—a tad self-indulgent, but that's just me. Other people seem to like it, and my motto as a critic has always been "Each one to his own taste."

AND YET MAYBE I AM BEING UNFAIR to my dear, protective friend. About a month ago, I received, on the same day, a letter from the aforementioned Lee Siegel and an e-mail from a third Lee Siegel, *who is also a writer*. The third Lee Siegel writes about science for a Salt Lake City newspaper and has a book coming out. He was disturbed about the morass of monikers and will now, he wanted to let me know, use his middle initial. He writes about science and he will use his middle initial: he is the good Lee Siegel. The letter from the other Lee Siegel was less reassuring. This Lee Siegel was not in the least disturbed about our triangular predicament. No, the fact that he shares his name with me, who toils in the same literary precincts, not only didn't disturb him, it seemed to cause him immense delight:

> "Dear Lee Siegel (or may I call you by my first name?), I am (and have been for some time) very grateful to you for being such a fine and wonderful writer, writing so many interesting things. People (sometimes, on a good day, gorgeous women) often tell me how much they enjoyed or even admired something that they think I wrote. . . . Conscience (unless the enthusiast is very, very good-looking indeed) usually constrains me to confess that there are two of us. I would be very unhappy and would probably change my name if you weren't so talented. I sometimes wonder if I was given tenure at the University of Hawaii because of your work. That being possible, do feel free to take credit for anything of mine that interests you. You certainly have my permission to sneak into your local Borders and paste photos of yourself over the one of me in my newest book. . . ."

WHOM THE GODS WISH TO DESTROY they first drive insane. I think I will go mad. Just when things were going so well, just when the mailman was beginning to smile at me, just when I could see renown winking on the horizon, this has to happen. Hand me my shades—the I-fornicators are after me. Maybe Hollywood is right, after all. Self overboard! Women and children and interiority first.

LEE SIEGEL

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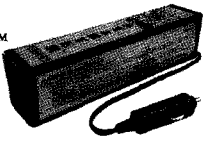

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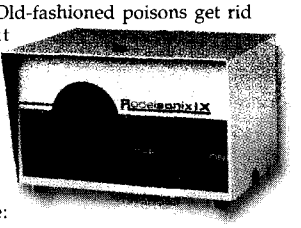

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